Forum: **Committee on the Rights of the Child**
Question of: **Ensuring the right of education in LEDCs**
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I. Description of the Issue

Education is widely recognised as one of the most powerful tools for human development and poverty reduction. According to the World Bank, global hourly wages rise by 9% for every additional year of schooling, and UNESCO estimates that universal secondary education could lift 420 million people out of poverty worldwide. Beyond individual income, education has driven nearly half of global income gains since 1980 by raising productivity and reducing inequality. Research by the CEPR further suggests that education returns explain 60–70% of real income gains for the world's poorest people, and over half of the rise in women's wage share. In a concrete country example, a secondary education in Tanzania cuts the likelihood of being a working poor adult by almost 60%. Despite this well-established importance, the right to education enshrined in international law since Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and reinforced by the legally binding International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966) remains far from a reality for hundreds of millions of people in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs).

The situation is most alarming in Sub-Saharan Africa, where 118 million children, adolescents and young people are currently out of school, and where the annual funding gap for education stands at $70 billion. South Asia and parts of Latin America also face serious challenges, with an estimated 9.5 million out-of-school children in Latin America and the Caribbean alone. Globally, the total number of out-of-school children and youth stood at 272 million in 2023 a figure that has increased by 3% since 2015, despite decades of international commitments. Furthermore, even those children who do attend school often receive a poor quality of education: only 58% of students worldwide achieved the minimum proficiency level in reading at the end of primary schooling, and learning outcomes are actively declining in many countries.

The reasons for this failure are multiple and deeply interconnected. Key barriers include chronic underfunding of public education systems, weak infrastructure, with over a fifth of primary schools globally lacking access to basic electricity, drinking water and sanitation, a severe shortage of trained teachers, and gender and disability-based discrimination. Children with disabilities are 2.5 times more likely to have never attended school at all. Beyond structural issues, armed conflict, forced displacement and the growing impact of climate-related disasters further disrupt access to education in the most vulnerable regions. Additionally, hidden costs such as transport, uniforms and school materials make nominally free schooling effectively unaffordable for the poorest families.

A wide range of actors are working to address these issues. Within the UN system, UNESCO sets global education standards and monitors progress, while UNICEF implements programmes on the ground and runs initiatives such as the Learning Passport. The Global Partnership for Education brings together governments, the private sector and civil society to channel funding into developing education systems. Human rights organisations such as Human Rights Watch and Save the Children document violations and advocate for policy change. However, despite these efforts, projections show that without significantly accelerated action, only one in six countries will achieve SDG 4 quality education for all by 2030, and an estimated 84 million children will still be out of school at that point.

II. Definition of Key Terms

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG[s])	Adopted 2015 by all Member States, Goal is to reach peace and prosperity for the people and the planet. Part of the Agenda 2030.
Education	The UN and UNESCO define education as a fundamental human right and a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes.
Declaration on the right of the child (1959)	Statement that every child is entitled to special care, protection and fundamental rights necessary for their wellbeing and

	development
Convention on the right of the child (1989)	Legal binding UN treaty that states that governments have to ensure all children's civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.
Committee on the right of the child	An international body of 18 independent human rights experts that monitors how countries implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
Millenium Development Goals	Eight international development targets established 2000 to be reached in 2015

III. Background information

Ensuring the rights of the child is one of the most essential human rights challenges of the modern world. Children are among the most vulnerable groups in society because they depend on adults and institutions for their safety, development, and well-being. Unlike adults, children are often unable to defend their own interests effectively, which makes legal protection, social support, and international cooperation especially important. Although significant progress has been made over the past decades, millions of children around the world continue to live in conditions that prevent them from fully enjoying their basic rights.

The issue of child rights includes a wide range of social, political, and economic concerns. Socially, many children are affected by poverty, neglect, discrimination, violence, trafficking, abuse, child labor, and lack of access to education and health care. These conditions can severely damage a child's physical and mental development and may have lifelong consequences. Children who grow up without adequate nutrition, emotional support, or a safe living environment are less likely to complete school, participate in society, or achieve long-term stability later in life. In this sense, violations of children's rights are not isolated incidents, but part of broader structural inequalities.

Politically, the protection of children depends heavily on the strength of state institutions, the rule of law, and the willingness of governments to enforce child protection standards. In

countries affected by conflict, political instability, corruption, or weak governance, children are especially exposed to exploitation and violence. Schools may be destroyed, health systems may collapse, and legal protections may not be properly enforced. In some cases, children are recruited into armed groups, displaced from their homes, or separated from their families. Even in stable countries, the political commitment to children's rights may be limited when governments fail to invest enough in social welfare, education, child protection services, and preventive programs.

Economically, child rights are closely linked to poverty and inequality. Families facing severe financial hardship may rely on their children to work, care for siblings, or contribute to household income instead of attending school. In many regions, poverty prevents children from accessing nutritious food, safe housing, clean water, medical care, and quality education. This creates a cycle in which disadvantaged children are denied opportunities that would allow them to improve their future prospects. Over time, this perpetuates inequality across generations and weakens social and economic development at the national level. For that reason, protecting children's rights is not only a humanitarian issue, but also an economic necessity.

The problem is especially serious in regions affected by armed conflict, forced displacement, natural disasters, and weak public infrastructure. In such contexts, children are at greater risk of being denied education, separated from their families, subjected to exploitation, or forced into dangerous living conditions. Refugee and internally displaced children often face additional barriers, such as language difficulties, legal uncertainty, and discrimination in host communities. However, child rights violations are not limited to conflict zones. In many societies, children continue to experience domestic violence, online exploitation, child marriage, and unequal access to opportunities based on gender, disability, ethnicity, or migration status. This demonstrates that the issue is global in nature and requires broad international attention.

Historically, the recognition of children's rights developed gradually as societies became more aware that children require special protection. For much of history, children were treated primarily as the property or responsibility of their parents rather than as individuals with independent rights. The modern understanding of child rights was shaped by international human rights developments in the twentieth century, especially after World War II. The most important legal framework in this area is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted by the United Nations in 1989. The CRC established that children have rights to

survival, development, protection, and participation, and it remains the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history. It also created a shared international standard for governments to follow in protecting the welfare of children.

Despite this strong international framework, implementation remains uneven. Many states have signed the convention, but practical enforcement often falls short because of limited funding, weak institutions, cultural resistance, or political neglect. Laws alone are not enough if children continue to lack access to schools, hospitals, safe homes, and legal protection. In addition, new global developments such as digital technology, migration, climate change, and economic inequality have created new risks for children that require updated responses. For example, children are now exposed to cyberbullying, online grooming, misinformation, and digital exploitation, while climate-related displacement can also threaten their stability and safety.

A solution is necessary because the rights of the child are directly connected to the future of society. When children are protected, educated, and given the opportunity to develop safely, they are more likely to become healthy, productive, and engaged members of their communities. On the other hand, when children are neglected or harmed, the consequences are long-term and often irreversible. Societies that fail to protect children face higher levels of poverty, crime, social unrest, and inequality. Therefore, ensuring the rights of the child must be treated as a global priority.

To address this issue effectively, governments, international organizations, civil society, and local communities must cooperate in a coordinated way. Strong legal systems, accessible education, healthcare, child protection services, poverty reduction policies, and public awareness campaigns are all necessary components of a long-term solution. Special attention should also be given to children in vulnerable situations, including refugees, children with disabilities, children living in poverty, and children affected by armed conflict. Ultimately, ensuring the rights of the child is both a moral obligation and a practical investment in a safer, fairer, and more sustainable world.

The historical development of child rights reflects a growing recognition that children require protection, care, and opportunities distinct from those of adults. In earlier centuries, childhood was often not viewed as a separate stage of life with specific needs. Children were frequently expected to work at an early age and were exposed to harsh living conditions, limited education,

and little legal protection. Over time, social reform movements, educational progress, and humanitarian ideas helped change public understanding of children's role in society.

The twentieth century marked a major turning point. After the devastation of two world wars, the international community increasingly recognized the need to protect vulnerable populations through universal human rights standards. This development led to the creation of several key international documents, including the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959 and later the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. The CRC was especially important because it transformed child protection from a moral idea into a legally binding international obligation for states that ratified it.

Since then, child rights have become an important part of global human rights policy. International organizations, national governments, and non-governmental organizations have worked to improve child protection, reduce child labor, expand education, and promote health and development. However, despite legal progress, implementation remains inconsistent, and many of the same problems continue to affect children today. This historical gap between legal recognition and real-life protection is one of the main reasons the issue remains urgent.

IV. Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Countries especially affected by this issue are Afghanistan, Sudan, Mali and Somalia this is due to armed conflicts, food crises and a lack of resources. Also, the whole area of Subsahara-Africa is severely affected due to a rise of population and poverty. This leads to half of all children in this area not being able to go to school. In parts of Asia and Latin-America there is an higher Educational Inequality so children from poorer households are more likely not to visit school.

There are many Organizations that have set their goal to fight against Children not going to school. There is UNESCO, which is documenting the situation and urges countries to invest in their education. UNICEF is on a quite similar mission; they are requesting to send money more specified to where it is needed. The organisation "Save the Children" is working directly in Crisis areas and is starting education projects and is supporting Schools as well as Teachers and lobbies in favour of the right on education. Also there is the UN-Funding Pot "Education cannot Wait" which was called into life to finance Education and the related infrastructure in Crisis- and Conflict Areas.

V. Timeline of events

Year	Event	Description
2000	World Education Forum, Dakar	164 countries declared the Dakar Framework for Action and set the Education for All Goals until 2015
2000	Millenium Development Goals (MDG 2)	First global Development goal for primary education
2015	World Education Forum	Incheon Declaration, focussed on Inclusion, Equity and Quality of Education.
2020s	Focus on Education in Crisis Areas	Wars and Climate Change make Emergency Education Important
2024 ->	Rising number of Children without access to Education	273 million children worldwide are not visiting School, especially in LEDCs

VI. Previous attempts to solve the issue

Since the turn of the millennium, a series of major international initiatives have been launched to secure the right to education in low- and middle-income countries (LEDCs). The most prominent efforts include the Education for All (EFA) agenda adopted at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, the Millennium Development Goal 2 on universal primary education, and the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on inclusive and equitable quality education adopted in 2015 through the Incheon Declaration. Additional mechanisms such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and the UN fund Education Cannot Wait (ECW) have been established to finance school systems and support education in conflict and crisis zones. These actions have increased school enrolment significantly, bringing tens of millions of children into classrooms and improving access in many regions.

However, despite these efforts, many of the original goals have not been fully achieved, and the reasons for this are deeply embedded in the structural and contextual challenges that LEDCs face. Under the Education for All agenda, the failure to meet the 2015 targets was largely due to

underfinancing of national education systems, rapid population growth, and the overwhelming impact of armed conflicts that dismantled school structures and displaced teachers and students. In countries such as Sudan, Somalia, Afghanistan, and the Central African Republic, schools were destroyed or closed, and education programmes could not be sustained. Similarly, under MDG 2, gains in enrolment were offset by high rates of school dropout, particularly among children from the poorest households, where poverty and hunger forced children to work instead of attending school.

When the global agenda shifted to SDG 4 and the Education 2030 framework, the focus moved from access to quality and equity. Yet this shift revealed that many LEDCs had expanded access without ensuring minimum learning standards, qualified teachers, or adequate learning materials. As a result, large numbers of children attend school but acquire insufficient literacy and numeracy skills, a phenomenon described as “learning poverty.” Girls, refugees, ethnic minorities, and children with disabilities continue to face systemic exclusion, meaning that the equity dimension of SDG 4 remains largely unfulfilled. Furthermore, political instability and weak governance in many LEDCs have prevented the implementation of national education plans, while international aid remains insufficient and often short-term, limiting long-term system strengthening.

The Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait have made important contributions, yet their impact is constrained by the same structural barriers. GPE funds are often insufficient to match the scale of need, and ECW operates in contexts where conflict makes education delivery extremely difficult and sometimes impossible. In both cases, the lack of sustainable financing, insecurity, and fragile state capacities prevent these programmes from reaching all children in need.

In summary, international actions since 2000 have improved school access in LEDCs, but they have repeatedly failed to achieve their full objectives because of underfinancing, population growth, conflict and insecurity, poverty, weak education quality, systemic exclusion of vulnerable groups, and unstable governance. These challenges are not external obstacles but are intrinsic to the environments in which education programmes operate, which explains why many well-designed initiatives have not delivered the expected results.

VII. Possible solutions

Experts today agree that resolving the education crisis in low- and middle-income countries (LEDCs) requires combining systemic reforms with targeted interventions that bring children directly into schools. These solutions are shaped by major international organizations, including UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, the IMF, Save the Children, Education Cannot Wait (ECW), and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), as well as donor nations such as Germany, the United States, the UK, and Japan, and national governments in LEDCs across Subsahara Africa, South Asia, and conflict zones. Equitable and sustainable financing is foundational. The IMF and World Bank emphasize redirecting public funds toward disadvantaged students and diversifying funding through partnerships, while UNESCO and UNICEF advocate equity-focused financing. Without predictable funding, reforms fail. Improving teaching quality is equally critical. The World Bank identifies better teaching as the most important factor in learning outcomes. UNESCO promotes global teacher training standards, while Save the Children and GPE implement mentorship programmes in over 60 low-income countries. UNICEF and ministries in Nigeria, Kenya, and Bangladesh pilot community-based monitoring to reduce teacher absenteeism.

Building inclusive and adaptive education ecosystems is essential. UNESCO's Education 2030 and UNICEF's equity strategies prioritize local solutions over rigid models. Education Cannot Wait and Save the Children support vulnerable groups in Sudan, Somalia, and Afghanistan, while GPE funds national education plans across Subsahara Africa and South Asia. Technology and community engagement further strengthen outcomes. The World Bank and UNESCO promote digital platforms in India, Kenya, and the Philippines, while UNICEF and Save the Children support parent-teacher associations in Ethiopia, Nepal, and Haiti. To bring out-of-school children into classrooms, experts emphasize practical interventions. Building schools and learning centres in underserved areas reduces distance barriers. UNESCO, UNICEF, and World Bank support new schools in remote and conflict-affected regions, while Save the Children operates Community Learning Centres as bridge programmes. Financial support to families includes conditional cash transfers through World Bank programmes in Mexico, Brazil, and Pakistan, fee waivers, scholarships, and direct cash transfers funded by UNICEF and GPE in Subsahara Africa. Food-for-education programmes, led by India's PM POSHAN, UNICEF, and World Bank, boost enrolment.

Health and nutrition interventions by UNICEF, WHO, and World Bank—including deworming, vaccinations, and mid-day meals in India, Bangladesh, and Kenya—reduce absenteeism. Safe transportation through buses, bicycles, and walking groups supported by UNICEF and governments in Nepal, Uganda, and Colombia helps children reach distant schools. Targeted re-enrolment programmes led by the World Bank, UNICEF, and Save the Children use household surveys, bridge courses, and case management in Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Myanmar. Inclusive models like multilingual education for refugees through UNESCO and UNICEF in Chad, Jordan, and Bangladesh, and flexible schedules for working children supported by ECW in crisis zones, reach excluded groups. Community engagement by GPE, Save the Children, and UNICEF ensures culturally appropriate schools in Ethiopia, Guatemala, and Liberia. Addressing social barriers through girl-focused scholarships from UNICEF, GPE, and Save the Children in Subsahara Africa and South Asia and policy reforms to remove discriminatory rules advocated by UNESCO ensures equity.

These strategies are qualified because impact evaluations by the World Bank, 3ie, and UNESCO show positive effects on enrolment, attendance, and progression. They directly address root barriers, cost, distance, health, safety, and exclusion rather than focusing only on long-term reforms. Through coordinated efforts of international organizations, donor nations, and LEDC governments, the global community can move closer to fulfilling the right to education for all children.

VIII. How to prepare as a delegate

It is mandatory two write two, preferably three position papers. Furthermore, you are obligated to write at least one draft resolution. It would be very pleasant if you sent in your papers on time. You will find the Date in the delegate booklet or on the website. If you don't send any papers at all or severely late you will not be able to receive any awards regardless of your "performance" on the debate. As every year we will nominate the best and the most distinguished (second best) delegate as well as the best first timer. To enable us to have a fruitful debate please prepare yourself very well.

IX. UN resolutions

UN-HRC Resolution 54/5: Ensuring quality education for peace and tolerance for every child

UN-HRC Resolution 59/9: The right to education.

X. Useful links

https://www.bmz.de/en/issues/education-a-human-right/education-in-developing-countries-197598
https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/crc
https://www.unesco.org/en/right-education/need-know

XI. Sources

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Best regards,

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