

The Kingdom of Belgium

Positions for the General Assembly Plenary

I.Examining the Challenges of Eliminating Forced Labor

The Kingdom of Belgium (Belgium) recognizes the importance of proper working conditions and places a major emphasis on the elimination of forced labor (implicitly referring to human trafficking and sexual violence, as Belgium believes a 13% increase in trafficking is a major area of concern) nationally and worldwide. Belgium feels it is essential for all nations to address these issues, especially in regions such as East Asia, Central Africa, and areas with high a influx of immigrants where trafficking and sexual labor are rampant. **Nationally**, Belgian employment policy is based on consultation between employers and workers. Belgian employers must comply with working conditions laid down by the Employment Contracts Act, the Labour Act, and the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) which is subject to the provisions of criminal law. **Regionally**, Belgium fully supports the efforts of the European Union and the standards they place on working conditions. Belgium acknowledges Title I Article 4 of the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights (CFR) which identifies the limitations and regulations placed on (sexual) slavery and/or servitude as well as human trafficking. The European Union strives to improve the working conditions of all the peoples in Europe by complementing policies initiatives taken by individual EU countries; according to the FPS Employment, Labour, and Social Dialogue Division, Belgium abides by CFR Title 1 Article 4 according to labour inspections done annually. **Internationally**, there are many factors that play a part in the issues of forced labor and working conditions, including poverty, gender inequality, and most relevantly immigration. Young immigrants often get caught up at hostile borders, falling victim to oppressive and exploitative workplaces, especially sexual slavery and sex tourism. When working to combat the issues of enforced labor, Belgium proposes a three step **Plan of Action** entitled **S.E.T.**; **S**trengthen global governance and work toward closing governance gaps in relation to forced labor. To achieve this goal, Belgium insists on **E**ncouraging the General Assembly of the UN to refer the topic of enforced labor to the International Law Commission as a key point of discussion and analysis. Belgium believes laws surrounding protection from forced labor are unclear, if prevalent at all and calls on the ILC work to defining these laws more precisely. **T**arget and penalize international human traffickers. Belgium believes punishing such offenders will be a step in the right direction when working to eliminate forced

labor, calling upon the ICC to investigate human trafficking occurring in the territory of States Parties or involving nationals of States Parties as perpetrators as a crime against humanity under Article 7 Section 1 of the Rome Statute.

II. Improving and Promoting Access to Quality Healthcare for Children

The Kingdom of Belgium (Belgium) acknowledges children's healthcare is vital to healthy childhood development and is committed to improving and promoting access to quality healthcare for all children. Belgium recognizes that developing countries fall far behind in this respect and Belgium insists the UN place this at the forefront of their agenda. **Nationally**, Belgium provides free subsidized health care from birth until age 18. Belgium and the World Health Organization (WHO) signed a Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) in 2016, a medium-term shared agenda outlining the priority areas of work and concern for six years (2016-2022)¹. The plan covers two main topic areas in regard to children's healthcare: non-communicable diseases and communicable diseases. Communicable diseases are one of the main priorities for Belgium both on a national and international level in cooperation with the WHO. This agreement not only outlines national healthcare concerns, but makes great strides at outlining how Belgium will contribute to its **Regional** and **International** counterparts systems of healthcare for children. The EU has the full support of Belgium on their strong stance in encouraging parents/caretakers to vaccinate their children; vaccines are the key point highlighted in the communicable diseases portion of the CCS with WHO. Under Article 35 the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights suggests access to health is a right all Europeans are entitled to². Belgium plans to continue to support health system strengthening through a yearly flexible funding to WHO and to support health systems internationally [in selected countries, excluding states such as West and East Africa where groups like Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab are heavily present], along with research on health technology by a yearly voluntary funding budget. Belgium acknowledges developing countries healthcare systems require most of this attention and funding, with the understanding that access to poor healthcare occurs most often in countries with political and humanitarian conflicts. Belgium and WHO place a great importance on reducing the amount of children affected by communicable diseases, such as HIV/AIDS that affect nearly 1.8 million

¹ *Country Cooperation Strategy WHO - BELGIUM 2016-2022*. http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/329778/CCS-Belgium-2016-2022-en.pdf?ua=1

² "Article 35 - Health Care." *European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights*. fra.europa.eu/en/charterpedia/article/35-health-care.

children worldwide; with an area of main concern being certain African Nations. While Belgium acknowledges recent tensions with the African Union (AU) on peacekeeping issues, it urges the EU to set these differences aside and work together to develop a **Plan of Action** regarding access to healthcare. Belgium proposes the EU, the AU, and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) work together with the help of WHO to develop similar such CCS plans for each region. The plans would outline areas of concern for each region and an allocation of funds meant to subsidize healthcare for children in said area.