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United Nations Human Rights Council

Topic A: Fast fashion in Asia,
measures to eradicate
exploitative work under SDG8



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The United Nations Human Rights Council

President: Manuel Alejandro Rodríguez Mendoza

Moderator: Sara Michelle Carrillo Navarro

Conference Officer: Maria Josse Gómez Pastrana

Greetings delegates,

As your chair, we are pleased to welcome you to the 15th edition of the United Nations Model of Alexander Bain Irapuato. We are fortunate and glad to work with you on the **United Nations Human Rights Council** where you will discuss issues of global importance, and we encourage you to do your best to come up with innovative and viable solutions. Throughout the days of debate, you will be discussing **Topic A: Fast fashion in Asia, measures to eradicate exploitative work under SDG 8**. We remind you of the importance of developing valuable skills to approach global problems considering the challenge of complying with the 2030 agenda by reaching peace, dignity, and equality.

As your chair, **Manuel Alejandro Rodríguez Mendoza, - and -** we sincerely hope you have the best experience in a Model of the United Nations. We, no se que nombres poner , after years of hard work and gained experience, are prepared and enthusiastic to seek for your potential and incredible skills, helping you with any doubt regarding the protocol, debate or topic.

Delegates, please, in case there is any doubt, do not hesitate to approach any member of the chair or high command. Remember, we are here for you, and we will always be happy to help.

See you soon,

United Nations Human Rights Council|Chair.





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SEMBLANCE

History:

The Human Rights Council, established in 2006 by the UN General Assembly, is the principal intergovernmental body within the United Nations dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. Composed of 47 Member States, it serves as a multilateral platform to address human rights violations and specific country situations, respond to emergencies, and make recommendations to improve human rights implementation on the ground. The Council receives technical, substantive, and secretariat support from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and was created to replace the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.¹

Actual state:


Today the Human Rights Council remains the UN's main body for promoting and protecting human rights worldwide. It recently concluded its 58th regular session, adopting 32 resolutions and launching a working group to draft a treaty on the rights of older persons. In October 2024, 18 new members were elected for the 2025–2027 term, with Saudi Arabia failing to secure a seat due to human rights concerns. The U.S. formally withdrew from the Council in early 2025, citing bias, though it reportedly continues to influence proceedings informally. Despite challenges, the Council stays active in addressing global human rights issues.²

Actions and objectives:

The Human Rights Council aims to promote and protect human rights globally by addressing violations and encouraging international cooperation. It serves as a key forum for dialogue among UN officials, member states, civil society, and human rights experts. The Council adopts resolutions and decisions during its sessions to express the global community's stance on specific human rights issues often prompting government actions. It convenes special sessions to address urgent crises, 36 held so far, and conducts the Universal Periodic Review to assess the human rights records of all UN Member States. Additionally, it appoints Special procedures, independent experts who monitor specific

¹ United Nations Human Rights Council. "OHCHR, HRC, Welcome to the Human Rights Council." OHCHR. United Nations Human Rights Council, 2023. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/about-council>.

² United Nations Human Rights Council. "OHCHR, HRC, Welcome to the Human Rights Council." OHCHR. United Nations Human Rights Council, 2023. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/about-council>.



countries or thematic issues, and authorize commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions to gather evidence on serious crimes such as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Limitations:

The Human Rights Council faces several limitations, including political influence and selectivity, as some member states with poor human rights records use their positions to shield themselves and allies. It lacks enforcement power, relying on moral pressure rather than legal authority to ensure compliance. Responses to urgent situations can be delayed due to political disagreements, and its effectiveness depends on voluntary cooperation from states, which may refuse access or ignore recommendations. Additionally, the Council is often criticized for being over-politicized, with geopolitical rivalries overshadowing genuine human rights concerns.³

Main accomplishments:

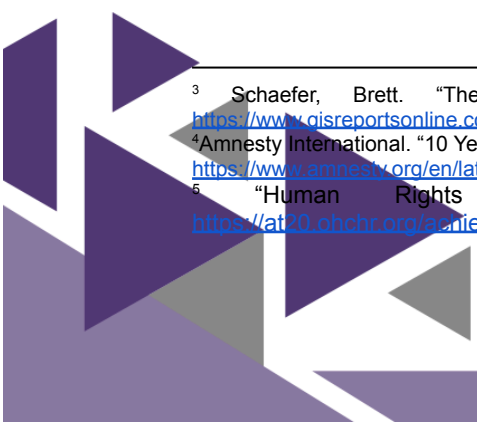
The UN Human Rights Council has made significant strides in promoting and protecting human rights globally, including the establishment of commissions of inquiry, special rapporteurs, and independent experts, as well as the adoption of new standards and resolutions addressing various human rights issues⁴


Among its key accomplishments are the creation of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, which holds all UN member states accountable for their human rights records, and the deployment of independent investigations into crises in countries like Syria, Myanmar, and Ukraine.⁵

³ Schaefer, Brett. "The UN Human Rights Council Is Broken." GIS Reports, July 26, 2023. <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/human-rights-council/>.


⁴ Amnesty International. "10 Years of the United Nations' Human Rights Council: Remarks by Salil Shetty," February 29, 2016. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/02/10-years-of-the-united-nations-human-rights-council/>

⁵ "Human Rights Achievements - OHCHR 20 Years." n.d. At20.Ohchr.org. <https://at20.ohchr.org/achievements.html>.





It has championed the rights of vulnerable groups, advanced international standards such as the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and fostered strong civil society participation. By supporting legal reforms, facilitating public dialogue, and integrating human rights across the UN system, the Council has become a central force for global accountability, protection, and advocacy.⁶



⁶ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. 2007. "UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." OHCHR. September 13, 2007. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/indigenous-peoples/un-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples>.

TOPIC A. Fast fashion in Asia, measures to eradicate exploitative work under SDG 8

1. Introduction:

According to Goal 8 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, promoting decent work and economic growth is essential to achieving sustainable development and human dignity. This goal emphasizes the importance of ensuring safe working conditions, fair wages, equal opportunities, and ending all forms of forced and child labor.

Article 23rd of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 10 (UDHR) affirms that all individuals are entitled to just and favorable conditions of work. Furthermore, Articles 23rd and 24th emphasize the importance of fair remuneration and reasonable limitations on working hours. However, the UDHR fails to provide a concrete definition for ambiguous terms such as 'fair' and 'reasonable limitations', thereby permitting garment suppliers to exploit the garment labourers.⁷

Fast fashion in Asia is a booming industry driven by global demand for cheap, trendy clothing. The industry is notorious for exploitative labor practices, including low wages, excessive working hours, unsafe working conditions, and even child labor. Under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 which promotes decent work and economic growth and that's why there is an urgent need to address these exploitative labor conditions.⁸

2. Concept definition:

1. **Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8):** Promotes inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.⁹


⁷"CLOAKED INJUSTICE: LABOUR LAW VIOLATIONS in the ASIA PACIFIC FAST FASHION INDUSTRY * -Benaisha Hansotia." n.d.

<https://lawasia.asn.au/sites/default/files/2023-11/CLOAKED%20INJUSTICE-%20LABOUR%20LAW%20VIOLATIONS%20IN%20THE%20ASIA%20PACIFIC%20FAST%20FASHION%20INDUSTRY%20%2811%20Sept%202023%29%20-%20Benaisha%20Hansotia.pdf>

⁸ AFM Redaktion. 2022. "The Death of Fast Fashion in Asia - <https://asiafundmanagers.com/>." <https://asiafundmanagers.com/> June 28, 2022. <https://asiafundmanagers.com/the-death-of-fast-fashion-in-asia/>.

⁹ Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all. (s.f.). Sustainable Development Goals.

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/economic-growth/#:~:text=Goal%208%20is%20about%20promoting.and%20decent%20work%20for%20all.>

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2. **thDecent work:** Employment that respects fundamental labor rights, ensures fair income, security in the workplace, and social protection for workers.¹⁰
 3. **Sustainable economic growth:** Economic development that meets current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own.¹¹
 4. **Safe working conditions:** Environments where workers are protected from physical and mental harm through adequate safety, health, and hygiene measures.¹²
 5. **Fair remuneration:** Compensation that is proportional to the work performed, allowing workers to live with dignity.¹³
 6. **Labor exploitation:** A practice where employers gain excessive profit by subjecting workers to unfair conditions, such as low wages or long hours.¹⁴
 7. **Child labor:** The employment of children in work that deprives them of their childhood, education, or harms their health and development.¹⁵
 8. **Fast fashion:** A business model that produces cheap, trendy clothing at high speed, often at the expense of labor rights and environmental sustainability.¹⁶
 9. **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) – Articles 23rd and 24th:** Fundamental rights guaranteeing just working conditions, fair pay, and reasonable limits on working hours.¹⁷
 10. **Ambiguous terms:** Undefined terms in international law that allow for broad interpretation and can lead to exploitation in practice.¹⁸

¹⁰ Decent work. (s.f.). International Labour Organization. <https://www.ilo.org/topics/decent-work>

¹¹ What is sustainable economic growth? (And how it works). (2025, 4 de marzo). Indeed. <https://uk.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/what-is-sustainable-economic-growth>

¹² Santhosh. (2024, 7 de febrero). What is a safe working environment: Benefits, best practices, and examples. CultureMonkey. <https://www.culturemonkey.io/employee-engagement/safe-working-environment/>

¹³ Fair remuneration | SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS CONSULTING. (s.f.). SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS CONSULTING. <https://www.sbclimited.org/fair-remuneration>


¹⁴ What is labour exploitation? | End Labour Exploitation. (s.f.). End Labour Exploitation. <https://endlabourexploitation.co.uk/about/>

¹⁵ What is child labour?(s.f.). UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/protection/child-labour>

¹⁶ Kelleher, D. (2023, 6 de octubre). Fast fashion | History, Definition, Brands, Companies, Environmental Impact, Waste, & Facts | Britannica. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/art/fast-fashion>

¹⁷ Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (s.f.). United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

¹⁸ Ambiguous. (s.f.). Collins. https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/ambiguous#google_vignette



3. Actual situation:

Workers in the fast fashion industry, especially in Asia, are affected in a highly unequal way due to social, economic, and gender-related factors. Women, who make up the majority of the garment workforce, are often perceived as submissive, cheap, and replaceable labor. Cultural expectations, lack of access to quality education, and limited employment alternatives keep them in cycles of exploitation and poverty.

These workers are subjected to inhumane conditions: excessive working hours, unsafe environments, meager wages, and denial of basic protections such as maternity leave, sick pay, or the right to unionize. These practices contradict international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.¹⁹

From the perspective of the Human Rights Council, this situation requires urgent attention. Governments and corporations must be held accountable for labor rights violations in their supply chains, and concrete actions must be taken to ensure that economic growth does not come at the expense of human dignity and justice.

4. Initiatives:

International bodies, including the Human Rights Council and the International Labour Organization (ILO), have taken steps to address labor rights violations in the fast fashion industry, particularly in Asia. These efforts aim to strengthen legal frameworks, protect vulnerable workers and hold corporations accountable for abuses in their supply chains.²⁰

Additionally, multi-stakeholder initiatives like the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh have been instrumental in improving safety standards in factories after tragedies like Rana Plaza. However, implementation gaps remain, and greater international coordination is needed to make these protections universal and enforceable.²¹

The Human Rights Council plays a crucial role in monitoring abuses, encouraging state cooperation, and ensuring that the right to decent work is upheld as part of a broader commitment to human dignity and non-discrimination.

¹⁹ Ross, Emma. 2021. "Fast Fashion Getting Faster: A Look at the Unethical Labor Practices Sustaining a Growing Industry." International Law and Policy Brief. The George Washington University Law School. October 28, 2021. <https://studentbriefs.law.gwu.edu/ilpb/2021/10/28/fast-fashion-getting-faster-a-look-at-the-unethical-labor-practices-sustaining-a-growing-industry/>.

²⁰ United Nations. 2023a. "OHCHR | the Core International Human Rights Instruments and Their Monitoring Bodies." OHCHR. 2023. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/core-international-human-rights-instruments-and-their-monitoring-bodies>.

²¹ Salminen, Jaakko. 2018. "The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh: A New Paradigm for Limiting Buyers' Liability in Global Supply Chains?" *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 66 (2): 411–51. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcl/avy030>.

5. Guide questions:

1. How does gender inequality contribute to the exploitation of women in garment factories?
2. What legal frameworks exist in your country to protect workers in the textile and fashion sectors?
3. What are the barriers that prevent workers from reporting labor abuses?
4. How can the Human Rights Council pressure multinational brands to uphold SDG 8 and labor rights?
5. What role should consumers and international organizations play in addressing these violations?
6. What innovative policies or partnerships could help eradicate exploitative labor practices in fashion?
7. What human rights violations are most common in the fast fashion industry across Asia?

6. Countries

- **Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**
- **Federal Republic of Germany**
- **French Republic**
- **Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**
- **Islamic Republic of Iran**
- **Islamic Republic of Pakistan**
- **Japan**
- **Kingdom of Thailand**
- **Malaysia**
- **Mongolia**
- **People's Republic of Bangladesh**
- **People's Republic of China**

- **Republic of India**
- **Republic of Indonesia**
- **Republic of Iraq**
- **Republic of the Sudan**
- **Republic of Maldives**
- **Republic of the Union of Myanmar**
- **Republic of the Philippines**
- **Republic of Korea**
- **Republic of Singapore**
- **Russian Federation**
- **Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**
- **United Arab Emirates**
- **United States of America**

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<https://lawasia.asn.au/sites/default/files/2023-11/CLOAKED%20INJUSTICE-%20LABOUR%20LAW%20VIOLATIONS%20IN%20THE%20ASIA%20PACIFIC%20FAST%20FASHION%20INDUSTRY%20%2811%20Sept%202023%29%20-%20Benaisha%20Hansotia.pdf>.

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