

WATERLOO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MODEL UNITED NATIONS



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

CHILD TRAFFICKING

MAY 12-14, 2026

KEY ISSUES:

1. Protecting young children from human trafficking
2. Finding way to protect young children once cases have made their way into the legal system.
3. Finding ways to hold those who traffick in children accountable for their actions (both the enablers and those who participate)
4. Finding ways to help survivors in their recovery from trafficking

Background

The Jeffrey Epstein case is currently captivating a global audience however the manner in which any investigation or lack of investigation has progressed raises many concerns. Some key takeaways from the ongoing saga include:

- a. An unwillingness to investigate possible high profile predators
- b. A continued unwillingness to have victim's stories revealed and/or believed
- c. The continued adherence to non-disclosure agreements through civil resolutions that have limited criminal investigations
- d. The imposition of "light sentences" given to main perpetrators and a willingness to proceed to plea-bargaining which seems to protect the perpetrators.
- e. The implications that those powerful individuals who have been held accountable seem to have been held accountable, not for their actions, but because of the damage to the reputation of the institutions they represent.
- f. The willingness to downplay, by some, the issues of age limitations and consent. Some have gone so far as to say that 16 and 17 year old victims are not explicitly child victims.

Unfortunately, the Epstein case has gained traction because of the powerful individuals who may have been involved. In the vast majority of child sex trafficking cases, the victims are anonymous, the perpetrators are anonymous, and as a result, any attempts at justice are virtually impossible. While the victims in the Epstein case have been horribly exploited and abused, there are millions of victims of sex-trafficking who will go unnoticed and their perpetrators unpunished.

The United Nations, through its Sustainable Development Goals, identified human slavery and human trafficking as a serious global issue. SDG Target 8.7 calls for immediate, effective measures to eradicate forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking, and to eliminate the worst forms of child labour **by 2025**, including child soldiers. But the reality is that not only has the goal not been reached but with only 5 years remaining in the lifespan of the SDGs, global efforts to combat human trafficking have fallen behind. There is an estimated 50 million people living in modern slavery which is 10 million more than in 2016. [Global Slavery Index](#) (GSI).

Some key limitations regarding the fight to meet the target set out in 8.7 includes the following:

1. There have been few countries which have in fact criminalised all forms of modern slavery in line with international standards.

2. And for countries which have in fact passed legislation dealing with human slavery and trafficking enforcement has been inconsistent and lacking.

United Nations resolutions regarding the issue of trafficking and slavery have tended to focus on fighting root causes (poverty and lack of education) and while this is important, it has not addressed fighting the immediate causes including lack of enforcement, lack of directed investigation, lack of adequate investigative tools including tracking of cases and lack of legitimate or effective prosecutorial tools.

Key Issues for Discussion

1. How can countries take decisive action to prevent child trafficking and slavery?
2. How can countries be held accountable for passing weak legislation or not passing legislation at all that is aimed at protecting children from exploitation?
3. How can countries be held accountable for protecting the perpetrators at the expense of the victims?
4. How can victims be protected throughout the judicial process while making sure that appropriate judicial standards of preserving the innocent until proven guilty.

Questions for your country:

1. How clear are the laws regarding child trafficking and slavery in your country?
2. How effective has your country been in fighting child trafficking and slavery?
3. How effective has your country been in aligning domestic law with international law?

Resources:

<https://www.walkfree.org/news/2025/un-2030-goal-to-end-modern-slavery-at-risk-of-being-missed-as-exploitation-risks-rise/>

<https://sdgresources.relx.com/tags/human-trafficking>

https://www.unodc.org/documents/Global_Report_on_TIP.pdf

<https://www.unicef.org/media/172716/file/UNICEF%E2%80%99s%20Action%20against%20Child%20Trafficking.pdf>

https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2024/GLOTIP2024_BOOK.pdf