Many different issues and concerns pertain to the harsh epidemic of child labor and human trafficking, which affects children from many countries around the world. Although trafficking can happen anywhere, it usually occurs mostly in the poorest regions of the world. In 1970’s human trafficking targeted young girls in Southeast Asia, but has since expanded to poorer countries in Africa like Nigeria, Uganda, and Ghana. In the late 80’s to early 90’s human trafficking was widely seen in Eastern European countries and South American countries as well. Because child labor is so easily feasible and cheap, about 90 dollars per child, bringing trafficked children into the US is easily done. In fact, there is, currently an astounding 14,500 children being exploited for labor in the US. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the number of children trafficked, worldwide, is estimated to be at 1.2 million each year. Although it is extremely challenging to account for every child who is victimized, numbers are assumed to increase in areas where organized crime is prominent.

In many nations, like the United States, children who are used to traffic other children, or who stimulate these crimes, are tried and sentenced as adults. However, Article 40 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that these children must have a fair trial, which evaluates and considers the age of the criminal and the situation in which the crime was committed. With exception to the US, Somalia, and Southern Sudan, many nations have signed this CRC treaty.
Human trafficking is often described as a violent act, like a child being forcefully kidnapped in the middle of night. Although this is often the case for many victims, others are tricked into being trafficked. For example, traffickers entice children to leave their countries and go to other areas where promised of income is much greater. Also, families may sell their children into the workplace.

The trafficker does everything to take complete control of the child’s life. Passports, birth certificates, national identity cards, and any other documents of citizenship are taken from the victim. The victim is often kept closely guarded and locked in a room when not accompanied. Even if escape were possible, the victim does not know who to go to for help. Often times the police system is so corrupt, that the victims are distrustful of the police. If the victim tries to escape, violence is almost always used to prevent them from escaping again or attempting to run.

Survivors of child labor are often returned to their native homes with no reintegration or rehabilitation. Often, they are returned to worse conditions than what their lives were before being victimized, and are not provided with the proper resources to live and maintain a normal life. This leads to numerous consequences and negative side effects on the victims. Not only are they emotionally and physically scarred, they most likely return to poverty stricken regions, which subject them to being trafficked once again. The UNODC has recognized this to be a major issue. They state that the “victims need assistance that extend beyond the end of their exploitation and any criminal prosecution.” They have created workshops and training courses for the victims to attend which includes vocational training that allows the victims to participate in six-month internships with different companies around the world, as well as social welfare
organizations to ensure they are financially able to move ahead in reestablishing their lives. (UNODC, Protecting Victims of Human Trafficking, 2012).

The United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime established the Palermo Convention in June 2012, which has had 147 participating nations. One of the Protocols established helps prevent trafficking from occurring and punishing those involved in the crime. This goal, supported by the 117 nations who signed the policy, also ensures the safety of the children through extra care and precautions once they return home. Although child labor may never go away, international bodies like the UN have created many goals and policies in order to prevent and stop as many human traffickers from further victimizing children.

The United Nations is committed to playing an active role in overcoming human trafficking and child labor. Targeting the root cause of the problem is the first step towards eradicating human trafficking. Since it’s establishment, the United Nations has been active in the fight against human trafficking. In 1949 the United Nations held its first Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons, which was the first legally binding international document that addressed the issue of human trafficking. The UN acknowledges human trafficking as a modern day form of slavery and has raised awareness and created new protocols towards border controls, in order to prevent trafficking to continue.

Western nations have established protection acts such as The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, in the US, as well as the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Europe. These acts state that victims of human trafficking should not be deported as criminals but as victims and should be granted the protection they deserve.
(Trafficking in Persons Report 2009). Eastern European nations are some of the very regions that are conducive to human trafficking. Because of this, the dangers of human trafficking are still rampant. Although national legislation has become stricter on criminal sanctions, trafficking has not really been approached. Many Asian countries do not have laws that protect people from human trafficking. Poverty is extremely prominent in most of these Asian countries. Therefore human trafficking is extremely high because the demand for cheap labor is so great. Like Asia, the fight against human trafficking in Africa is very low. Although there have been efforts to increase awareness and to strengthen legislation, many regions in Africa do not have the resources to implement laws.
Annotated Sources

International Labor Organization, on the Issue of Child Trafficking:
This website gives general knowledge on human trafficking as well as up to date statistics, pertaining to different regions. It provides research and projects aimed to stopping human trafficking.

UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime:
This website provides a treaties document which states the different protocols created during the UN convention.

Convention on the Rights of the Child:
http://www.unicef.org/crc/
This website pertains mostly to children. It gives information and provides research on child labor. It also allows people to become involved in stopping the epidemic as well.

Child Labor Coalition According to the ILO:
http://stopchildlabor.org/
This website pertains to the child labor laws of children. It provides stories and research found on victims from all over the world.

“Trafficking in Persons Report 2009: Introduction,” U.S. Department of State,
This website gives facts on different foreign policies and the different stand points from regions around the world on the issue of human trafficking.