Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Background Guide Topic: Combating the Food Crisis



Director's Note

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Food and Agriculture Organization for Japan Metropolitan Model United Nation 2024! My name is Hideka Haga from Senzoku Gakuen High School, and I will be the director of this committee.

In this chaotic world we live in today, some social problems can easily be unnoticed. This year's theme is to "magnify" global attention to those problems, and we believe the food crisis requires further action towards solving the problem. Food crisis, a state of community with insufficient food and a high rate of malnutrition, is a social problem that directly affects our lives, and has relations with many other problems we are facing. It is also a timely topic because the recent pandemic and specter of war in Eastern Europe and the Middle East have had a great impact on global food security. As many countries depend on imports in their food supply chain, coming together with other countries is crucial when combating this issue.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of the delegates for applying to the Japan Metropolitan Model United Nations 2024 and I hope the delegates will be able to share their ideas, discuss and learn many skills from each other. I'm excited to meet you all at the conference!

Sincerely,

Videka

Hideka Haga Director of Food and Agriculture Organization Senzoku Gakuen Model United Nations Club Japan Metropolitan Model United Nations



Introduction of the Committee

History of the Committee

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was founded in 1945 to "achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives." FAO takes responsibility for assembling resources to solve the crisis and currently has 194 member nations.¹

Introduction to the Topic

As the world faces an immense food crisis fueled by conflict, economic shocks, COVID-19, and climate change. In 2023, 345 million people in 79 countries suffered from acute food insecurity.

Conflict is the most significant driver of food insecurity as 117.1 million people have been affected by it. Food insecurity is classified into different phases by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Initiative (IPC) from phase 1 (Minimal) to phase 5 (Catastrophe/Famine). People in conflict zones have been suffering

¹ *About FAO*. (n.d.). Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. <u>https://www.fao.org/about/what</u>



from IPC phase 3 (Crisis).² The war in Ukraine has been the biggest driver of insecurity since Ukraine and the Russian Federation both make mass contributions to the trade of fertilizer and essential food commodities.³ Other conflicts have been destroying the world's food supply system, resulting in a rise in average food prices and increase of food insecure people. In Myanmar, where the military took over in 2021, the average retail price of a basic food basket was up by 27 percent after the coup. More than 13.2 million people, which is one fourth of Myanmar's population, are moderately or severely food insecure.⁴

Increasing temperature, weather variability, extreme weather events, and natural disasters have always had a great impact on food production because of agriculture's vulnerability to climate change. As the effects of climate change worsen, managing food production by reducing emissions of

² Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC) 2023. (n.d.). Food Security Information Network (FSIN). https://www.fsinplatform.org/global-report-food-crise s-2023

³ Proposals | In Focus | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (n.d.). *InFocus*. <u>https://www.fao.org/in-focus/policy-proposals/en</u>

⁴ *Myanmar emergency* | *World Food Programme*. (2023, June 23).

https://www.wfp.org/emergencies/myanmar-emergen cy

harmful substances, enhancing resilience and increasing productivity are in need.⁵

Even though the World Health Organization (WHO) declared an end to the COVID-19 global health emergency, new infectious diseases might cause the same situation COVID-19 created. Therefore, global measures to minimize the impact of pandemics are required.⁶ In 2020, the lockdown measures many countries took halted food production and reduced exports, resulting in significant loss of food supply in developing countries. Not only was a loss of food supply the result of the lockdown, but it was also caused by major suppliers of main staple foods reducing or banning the exports to make sure their country had enough food to cope with the pandemic. Countries that rely on imports have an increasing number of food insecure people while the domestic crops go to waste.

Key Terms

Food Security

Food security is when all people have an active and healthy life with economic and physical access to nutritious food.⁷

Food Shock

Food shock denotes a decrease in the influx of food, loss of harvest, or livestock. Climate change and geopolitical crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic are the main causes of food shock. Not only the environmental effect but also the decrease in demand for food can also affect the shock.⁸

Food Loss

Food loss refers to the food that is lost in the food supply chain. The loss occurs before people have a chance to eat it, which is different from food waste. In developing countries, the major cause of food loss is poor storage. In developed countries, the use

⁶ COVID-19 is exacerbating food shortages in Africa. (2020, April 27). World Economic Forum. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/africa-coro navirus-covid19-imports-exports-food-supply-chains



https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-021-01868-1

⁵ Climate-Smart Agriculture. (n.d.). World Bank. https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climate-smart-ag riculture

⁷ World Bank Group. (2023, June 11). *What is food* security? there are four dimensions. World Bank. https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/ food-security-update/what-is-food-security ⁸ Bundell, S., & Howe, N. P. (2021). Food shocks and how to avoid them. Nature.

Japan Metropolitan Model United Nations March 23-24, 2024 jmmunadmin@senzoku.ac.jp

of machines in harvesting, and the expiry of foodstuffs result in food loss.⁹

Food Waste

Food waste is human consumption that is discarded. 1.3 billion tons of food, which is one third of the world's food production, is wasted every year.¹⁰

Malnutrition

Malnutrition is the condition when nutrients that people need and the nutrients people intake are imbalanced.¹¹

High Yielding Varieties (HYV)

High Yielding Varieties are agricultural crops that have been selected and developed to give high productivity. Wheats, rice, corn, potatoes, beans and cottons are the major examples of HYV.¹²

Integrated Food Security Phase

¹¹ Malnutrition. (n.d.).

https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answe rs/item/malnutrition

https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-12-810521-4.00004-9



Classification (IPC)

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification is the global standard for measuring food insecurity. IPC phase three: acute food insecurity is the phase "when some people can meet their minimal food needs only by selling essential possessions, and when others are using up essential resources to support a limited diet."¹³

Current Situation

Since 2018, food insecurity has been consistently rising. The increasing frequency of and severity of climate shocks, regional conflicts, and the COVID-19 pandemic have all taken their toll. Furthermore, the situation took an even more dramatic turn with the war in Ukraine. Disruption of grain trade pushed the prices of food and fertilizers higher still, resulting in more than 820 million people going to bed hungry around the globe.¹⁴ The UN World Food Program (WFP) estimates that based on figures from

⁹ Food loss and waste. (n.d.). WWF. https://wwf.panda.org/discover/our_focus/food_practi ce/food_loss_and_waste/

¹⁰ Food Waste: What is it and how does it affect the environment? (2020, October 16). BBC Newsround. https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/54466096

¹² Chiona, M., Chigeza, G., & Ntawuruhunga, P. (2017, January 1). *Exploring Climatic Resilience Through Genetic Improvement for Food and Income Crops*.

¹³ The 5 steps from food security to famine | World Food Programme. (2021, December 21). https://www.wfp.org/stories/5-steps-food-security-famine

¹⁴ Georgieva, K., Sosa, S., & Rother, B. (2022, September 30). *Global Food Crisis demands support for people, open trade, bigger local harvests*. IMF. <u>https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/09/30/gl</u> <u>obal-food-crisis-demands-support-for-people-open-ta</u> <u>de-bigger-local-harvests</u>

the 79 countries where data is available, more than 345 million people face high levels of food insecurity in 2023, which is more than double the number of 2020. This constitutes a rise of 200 million people compared to pre-pandemic levels.¹⁵

Going hungry

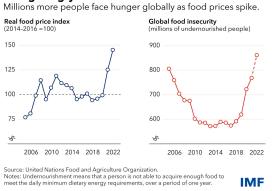


Figure 1: Food prices and global food insecurity

Even more distressing, over 35 million children under the age of 5 are suffering from wasting, which is the most visible and life-threatening form of malnutrition.¹⁶

Conflict

With 70% of the world's hungry people living in areas affected by war and violence, conflict remains the biggest driver of hunger.

¹⁵ A Global Food Crisis: World Food Programme. UN World Food Programme. (n.d.).

https://www.wfp.org/global-hunger-crisis

¹⁶ Global Food Crisis. Plan International. (2023, May 25).

https://plan-international.org/emergencies/global-food -crisis/



¹⁷ Though the impact of the food crisis is seen everywhere, the suffering is worst in 48 countries, many highly dependent on imports from Ukraine and Russia. About half of those countries are especially vulnerable due to severe economic challenges, weak institutions, and fragility.¹⁸

Climate Crisis

Global warming is another contributor to the food crisis, influencing weather patterns such as heat waves, heavy rainfall, and droughts. Unstable weather leads to the rise of food commodity prices, which was the main factor of 2021 that pushed approximately 30 million additional people in low-income countries toward food insecurity. Ironically, global warming pushes further food insecurity, but the production of food pushes further global warming, as the global food system is estimated to be responsible for about a third of greenhouse gas emissions, which is the second biggest

¹⁷ *A Global Food Crisis: World Food Programme.* UN World Food Programme. (n.d.). https://www.wfp.org/global-hunger-crisis

¹⁸ Georgieva, K., Sosa, S., & Rother, B. (2022, September 30). *Global Food Crisis demands support for people, open trade, bigger local harvests. IMF. Gl*<u>https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/09/30/</u> global-food-crisis-demands-support-for-people-opentrade-bigger-local-harvests

source of methane and biodiversity loss, with energy sectors being the first. ¹⁹

Impact on Girls

With women and girls accounting for 70% of the world's hungry population, food scarcity places girls at risk of not only starvation, but gender-based discrimination and violence.²⁰ When facing food insecurity, girls are more likely to be taken out of schools, or forced into child labor and marriages to relieve pressure on the household finances or obtain dowry payments.

Interviews and analysis carried out across eight countries– Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Haiti – found that although the exact causes of hunger differ from country to country, violence against girls and women related to hunger is increasing. In addition to the lack of education and forced marriages, girls and women also face sexual and physical violence as they search for drinking water at

https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2022/10/ 17/what-you-need-to-know-about-food-security-andclimate-change

²⁰ *World hunger and its impact on girls.* Plan International. (2022, August 4). https://plan-international.org/publications/world-hung er-impact-girls/



night. The reason they search at nighttime is to avoid competing with others for water. ²¹

Case Studies

Subtopic I: Refugees

According to the UNHCR's Refugee Population Statistics Debestate, Syria has 12.1 million people suffering from food insecurity, and 6.8 million people are internally displaced. The number symbolizes the connection of food insecurity and refugees. The continuing conflict in some parts of the country and the rise of fuel costs directly links to the amount of refugees Syria has today. The number of people who are forcibly displaced has increased worldwide to 108.4 million people, due to the Ukraine-Russia war.22 Refugees and people who are displaced live an unstable life under a harsh environment, with limited food and access to the world. UNHCR has been working with national governments and making measures such as preventing malnutrition by supporting safe access to health and basic services, especially for young children and infants, as it is clarified

¹⁹ World Bank Group. (2022, October 19). *Climate explainer: Food Security and climate change*. World Bank.

²¹ Beyond hunger: The gendered impacts of the global hunger crisis - world. ReliefWeb. (2023, January 26). https://reliefweb.int/report/world/beyond-hunger-gen dered-impacts-global-hunger-crisis

²² UNHCR Refugee Data Finder (2023, June 14). https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/

that the first two years of childhood are the most important, and the key period of the growing process. Proper treatment during this time affects their life, and reduces their life-long risks of disease and cultivates better developments overall.²³

Subtopic II: Agriculture

Global food demand is estimated to increase by more than 50% in 2050, but due to climate change, agricultural yields of major crops could decrease over that same period. Fertile soils and adapted and productive crops are crucial for food security, and fostering crop varieties resilient to climate change, pests, extreme weather, and variable rainfall helps as well.²⁴

Case Study 1: India (Green Revolution)

The Green Revolution is the usage of high-yielding varieties (HYV) of wheat and rice particularly during the 1960s to increase food crop production, especially in India.²⁵

https://www.state.gov/on-the-global-food-crisis/

²⁵ *Green revolution*. Green Revolution - an overview | ScienceDirect Topics. (n.d.). https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-plane

https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-plane tary-sciences/green-revolution



The introduction of the HYVs resulted in more jobs, less water usage, and ultimately, the increase in total production. However, the consequences were the loss of biodiversity, increased use of pesticides, and increased rural inequality, as HYVs are costly.²⁶ Furthermore, the success of the Green Revolution has largely bypassed Africa, as both rice and wheat are relatively irrelevant crops in Africa.²⁷

Case Study 2: Sahel-Sahara Region

The combination of factors such as climate change, overgrazing, and poor land management practices, created the intrusion of the Sahara desert, threatening the livelihoods of millions of people, while sparking further violent conflict in the area due to desperation.²⁸

²³ UNHCR Nutrition and food security

https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/protect-human-rig hts/public-health/nutrition-and-food-security ²⁴ U.S. Department of State. (2023, July 13). *On the*

Global Food Crisis - United States Department of State. U.S. Department of State.

²⁶ Notes on high-yielding varieties of seeds. Unacademy. (2022, April 29).

https://unacademy.com/content/bank-exam/study-mat erial/general-awareness/notes-on-high-yielding-variet ies-of-seeds/#:~:text=Higher%2Dyielding%20seeds% 20(HYV),essential%20to%20using%20these%20seed s

²⁷ *Green revolution*. Green Revolution - an overview | ScienceDirect Topics. (n.d.).

https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-plane tary-sciences/green-revolution

²⁸ The Great Green Wall and the future of Food Systems in Africa 2030-2050. Sciences Po. (n.d.). https://www.sciencespo.fr/en/events/the-great-greenwall-and-the-future-of-food-systems-in-africa-2030-2 050

The Green Wall project is a complex program to reduce this rural poverty with multiple dimensions such as resilience in view of the climate change crisis, gender and nutrition, security and fragility, and trade facilitation to strengthen sustainable agriculture systems. Specifically, by planting trees across the region, it recycles the nutrition back into the soil.

The project has improved food security for about 3 million people and reversed the degradation of about 6 million hectares of land.²⁹

Subtopic III: Environment

The natural environment holds a key role for food production around the world, and according to the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), problems like land degradation, urban expansion, conversion of crops and cropland for non-food production, and climate change are greatly damaging to agricultural industries. It is predicted that cropland will be reduced by 8-20% as the food demand will increase 60% proportionally by 2050 with the growing world population.³⁰

³⁰ Enviornmental Crisis, the Envitonment's Role In Averting Future Food Crisis. UNEP. (n.d.).



Case Study 1: Uses of Cropland Global agricultural land area is

approximately five billion hectares, or 38 percent of the global land surface. About one-third of this is used as cropland, while the remaining two-thirds are for animal feed and grazing livestock.³¹ Growing populations and demands for new diets affect the food crisis. For example, the demand for animal products increased by 65% over the past 50 years.³² To avoid the food crisis, all countries must find a balance between the area of cropland used for food and non-food production since the amount of animal feed needed to be produced will increase as well.

Case Study 2: Locust Infestation

Desert locusts' single square kilometer of swarm holds a capacity to consume the same amount of food in one day as 35,000 people. They are mostly found in deserts of east Africa, near east and south-west Asia, but

²⁹ *3 innovators in Africa growing food as a force for good.* World Economic Forum. (n.d.). https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/03/africa-regr eening-food-security-climate/

https://www.gwp.org/globalassets/global/toolbox/refe rences/the-environmental-crisis.-the-environments-rol e-in-averting-future-food-crises-unep-2009.pdf ³¹ Land use in agriculture by numbers. FAO. (2020,

May 7)

https://www.fao.org/sustainability/news/detail/en/c/12 74219/

³² Competition for land for increasing human consumption of food, fodder, fibre and fuel. WAD. (2019, April 25) https://wad.irc.ec.europa.eu/croplands

their mobility and fecundity cannot be underestimated. As a response to locust infestation, FAO uses the data earned by monitoring locusts to predict their migration and breeding, but this lacks decisiveness.³³

Past Actions

Sustainable Development Goal 2, Zero Hunger by 2030

Sustainable Development Goal 2 aims for the creation of a world without people suffering from hunger and food insecurity by 2030. This goal plans to end hunger for all people and ensure enabled access to food. The COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia war has further disrupted the food supply chain, increasing the figure by nearly 320 million people in just one year in 2020.

The targets of this goal include:

•Ending hunger, and ensuring access by all people to safe, nutritious food

·Ending all forms of malnutrition

• Doubling the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers

•Ensuring sustainable food production systems

- ·Increasing investment in agriculture
- ·Correcting and preventing trade restrictions

³³ Desert Locust. FAO. (n.d.) https://www.fao.org/resources/digital-reports/desert-l ocusts/en/



and distortions in world agricultural markets •Adopting measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets.³⁴

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The eight goals with the target of reducing the number of people living in extreme poverty by half in developing regions by 2015 was achieved early in 2010 and produced the most successful anti-poverty movement yet, urging unprecedented efforts to combat the problems surrounding the world's poorest. The goal included "Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger" and the UN is currently working with governments, civil societies, and other partners to build on the momentum generated by the MDGs.³⁵

Zero Hunger Challenge

The Zero Hunger Challenge was launched by the United Nations Secretary General in 2012 during the Rio+20 World Conference on Sustainable Development. Improvements are envisioned in creating employment, cutting poverty, increasing the food supply,

https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

³⁴ Martin. (2023, August 9). Goal 2: Zero hunger -United Nations Sustainable Development. United Nations Sustainable Development.

https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger/ ³⁵ United Nations. (n.d.). United Nations Millennium Development goals.

and stabilizing prices.

This challenge calls for:

·Zero stunted children under the age of two

• 100% access to adequate food all year round

•All food systems having sustainable 100% increase in smallholder productivity and income

•Zero loss or waste of food.³⁶

Food Systems Summit

The Food Systems Summit was convened in 2021 as an opportunity to leverage the power of food systems for the recovery from COVID-19 pandemic. Through this summit, the UN reaffirmed its commitment to promote human rights for all and ensure everyone everywhere has the opportunity to participate in combating the food crisis, guided by the following Action Track. These Action Tracks are:

- 1. Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- 2. Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- 3. Boost nature-positive productions
- 4. Advance equitable livelihoods
- 5. Build resilience to vulnerabilities,

³⁶ At Zero Hunger Challenge launch, Secretary-General says sustainable development 'Simply not possible' in world where 1 billion people are hungry every day | UN Press. (2012, June 22). https://press.un.org/en/2012/sgsm14374.doc.htm



shocks and stress^{37 38}

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

The International Fund for Agricultural Development focuses on investing in people in rural areas to increase their food security, improve the nutrition of their families, and enhance their incomes. It also helps build resilience, expand their businesses, and take charge of their own development. More than 483 million people in poverty from rural areas have been supported over the past four decades by IFAD.³⁹

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is a specialized agency that leads international efforts to defeat hunger, such as achieving food security for all and making sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives. FAO works in 130 countries worldwide with 194 members including the European Union and plans to

³⁷ United Nations. (n.d.-a). *The summit* | *United Nations*.

https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/summit ³⁸ United Nations. (n.d.-a). *Action Tracks* | *United Nations*.

https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/action-tr acks

³⁹ International Fund for Agricultural Development. (n.d.). IFAD. <u>https://www.ifad.org/en/</u>

implement 12 projects worth \$264 million aimed to boost local and global health security, recovering from the pandemic. ⁴⁰

World Food Programme(WFP)

WFP programmes not only provide assistance for emergencies for immediate food and nutrition needs but also supports the creation of resilience in communities to address the root cause of the food hunger crisis. The programme aims to prioritize nutrition by continuing support to the government to provide children with nutritious school meals and strengthening their national social protection systems. In four years, WFP and local communities succeeded in the Sahel Resilience Scale-up, turning 158,000 hectares in the Sahel region into farms, to the benefit of over 2.5 million people. ⁴¹

Tips from the Chairs

Before the conference, please make sure to research your country's stance.

Understanding your country well will lead to confident speech making and giving, and help you negotiate and discuss with other

⁴¹ UN World Food Programme (WFP). (n.d.). https://www.wfp.org/



delegates. In order to make the most of it, please first consider the "questions to consider." It will also be helpful to research other country's stances.

Questions to Consider

- Does your country want to prioritize agriculture or biodiversity?
- Can your country afford agricultural innovations?
- How has COVID-19 pandemic and/or the war in Ukraine affected the food distribution system in your country?
- What past actions has your country taken to combat the food crisis?
- What action has your country taken to raise agricultural production?
- Are there any extreme weather or natural disasters that have affected your country's agricultural growth?
- Can your country support refugees that are in a state of malnutrition?

Guidelines for Position Papers

Position papers must clearly articulate the current situation of your country, briefly explain the past actions it has taken, and

⁴⁰ Home | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (n.d.). FAOHome.

https://www.fao.org/home/en/

further denote possible solutions. Papers may also include international resolutions and strategies to combat the issue discussed in your committee; however, the main focus must be on your country. When developing your position papers, please focus on information that directly relates to the topic. General information about your country, such as its geographical location, major cities, or major trade exports, should not be included to lengthen your report. Remember that delegates and chairs do not have a lot of time during the conference to read the position papers. If you want to successfully press the case of your country, you want your position papers to get to the point quickly and persuasively.

Closing Remarks

We would like to thank you again for your participation in JMMUN. Please keep in mind that this background guide is only a brief introduction to the conference. We highly recommend every delegate to research in depth and consider multiple possible solutions to combat the food crisis. Again, please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns! We are looking forward to seeing you all in March.

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