

Food and Agriculture Organization: Food Insecurity in Conflict Zones



BunnyMUN III

L.B. POLY - October 19, 2024

BACKGROUND GUIDE TABLE OF CONTENTS

Head Chair Letter.....	3
Vice Chair Letter.....	5
How To MUN.....	6
Committee Description.....	7
Topic Synopsis.....	8
Background.....	9
UN Involvement.....	14
Bloc Positions.....	16
Questions to Consider.....	19
References.....	20

HEAD CHAIR LETTER

Salutations Delegates!

My name is Janelle Rodgers, and I am so excited to say that I will be your Co-Head Chair for your FAO committee! I am currently a senior at Long Beach Polytechnic High School, and this is my second year in MUN. Model UN has allowed me to really open my perspectives to new and varying opinions, which I now believe is an essential skill for success. I truly do love MUN, and hope after being a part of this FAO room, you do too!

Some of my favorite hobbies of mine include photography. I have a love of being behind the camera (don't get me wrong, I have a soft spot for being in front of it too), but something about controlling the look, vibe, and feel of a photo is everything! In addition, I love fashion and claim to have a diverse sense of style. I've been styling my friends and peers ever since I was little, and like to say that I have an eye for pieces with such potential!

I hope you found some joy in reading a little about me, and I can't wait to hear all of your bright and inspiring ideas. I can't contain my excitement regarding meeting you all, and being your Co-Head Chair! If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, feel free to contact me!

Best Wishes,

Janelle Rodgers

FAO | Co-Head Chair | nellierodgers345@gmail.com

HEAD CHAIR LETTER

Hi Delegates!

My name is Taylor Chay, and I am thrilled to be one of your head chairs for Bunny MUN III's FAO committee! I am a sophomore at Poly and have been involved in Model UN since eighth grade. My first conference was the one and only, Bunny Mun! It's crazy to imagine from then, that I'd be a chair! My 8th grade speech and debate teacher at Newcomb encouraged me to join MUN and I have since learned more about our world, built new friendships, and grown confidence. Bunny Mun is dear to my heart, and my chairs at Bunny Mun were incredibly kind and supportive. I hope we can provide you with the same welcoming environment!

I love contributing to Poly's school spirit by being involved! Besides MUN, I am an editor for our school newspaper and I serve as the Co-Vice president of Poly's UNICEF club. In my free time I love to travel, bake, golf (although I am not particularly good), hangout with my friends, and write.

When I initially joined MUN I was very shy, and I know MUN can be intimidating. I encourage you to push yourself outside of your comfort zone and be confident, even if you have to fake it! I am ecstatic to meet you all, if you have any questions do not hesitate to reach out to me!

Sincerely,

Taylor Chay

FAO | Co-Head Chair | taylorchay32@gmail.com

VICE CHAIR LETTER

Dear Delegates,

My name is Sophie Nishikawa and I have the pleasure of serving as your Vice Chair for Bunny MUN III's FAO committee. I'm currently a junior at Long Beach Polytechnic High School and I've been working with the MUN program here since my freshman year. MUN has been a great experience that has opened me up to collaborate and debate with people from China to Hungary to Kenya. It's a great experience that I hope you will carry with you into your time in high school, so it is my sincere thanks that you allow me to help you start your MUN journeys

Apart from MUN, I also participate in several other clubs and activities around the Poly campus. I am the President of Poly's UNICEF Club, I am a third year member of Female Leadership Academy, and I am playing varsity tennis for my second year. Outside of school, I enjoy reading (I'd love any recommendations), baking, knitting, and playing piano, all of which I can do to varying degrees of success, but enjoy nonetheless.

Thank you for taking the time to read a little about me, and I hope to learn about you all when you come to Bunny MUN III. I trust that all of you will bring new and creative ideas on this issue and I look forward to hearing from you about everything that you come up with. Research hard and prepare to debate, I'm very excited to see what you can do. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to me or any other member of the dais through our emails.

Sincerely,

Sophie Nishikawa

FAO | Vice Chair | sophiennishikawa@icloud.com

HOW TO MUN

So, you're probably wondering: How do I prepare for debate? Well, here are some starting points to begin your country research!

1. Read through this background guide
 - a. find your country in Bloc Positions (pg. 16) and read that paragraph
2. Look for information on your country in the CIA World Factbook and BBC Country Profiles, linked here:
 - a. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/>
 - b. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country_profiles/default.stm
3. Look at the Questions to Consider (pg. 19) and try to answer them (do some research on the internet!)
4. Do more research on the internet for:
 - a. previous country actions
 - b. previous NGO and United Nations actions
 - c. possible solutions

During the committee, all delegates will present an “opening statement.” This is a short introductory speech and will only last about 30 seconds to 1 minute—nothing too bad! You can practice and time your speech using a timer.

These opening statements are written beforehand. They don't have to be memorized, either. You can print or write your speech, then read off the paper.

Your opening statement should include:

1. Your country's position on the issue at hand
2. What your country has done in the past
3. Possible solutions that align with your country's position
 - a. This is what you will discuss in the main part of the committee! Including this in your opening statement is a great way to let other delegates know where you stand.

COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION

FAO is the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. FAO aims to eliminate hunger everywhere and to battle food insecurity with high-quality and nutritious food for all. With 195 members, FAO has worked to protect the right to food across the world since its inception in 1945, providing both education and developmental programs alongside just food.

Since the first World Food Survey, FAO has tirelessly sought after the true state of the world's food situation and cataloged the issues present in order to provide the appropriate corrective measures. Across times of crisis, providing food safely to areas of need has remained a top priority.

To prevent and fix the world's food insecurities is the chief goal of FAO, working with local governments and adapting to population growth and urbanization patterns in order to provide the best possible outcome for people everywhere. Food is political and FAO works to protect it as a right.



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**

TOPIC SYNOPSIS



As the tragedy of war rises, food insecurity emerges, becoming a battle that costs lives. With 70 percent of people who struggle with food insecurity living in conflict zones, the urgency to address this global crisis is clear. A lack of access to sufficient, nutritious, and affordable food threatens human health and well-being.

During armed conflict, the civilian population cannot simply survive without the bare minimum of food and water. But yet, conflicts and war steer food insecurity depending on how opposing parties choose to wage their battles, and indirectly disrupt food systems. Conditions and circumstances vary significantly, but food insecurity specifically in conflict zones can displace farmers and destroy agricultural assets, disrupt markets, damage livelihoods, as well as ultimately breed hunger. Those combating food insecurity in conflict zones face limited healthcare resources, susceptibility to diseases, increased prices of food, and displacement. Children and women are disproportionately affected by these issues, as children's dependency on food influences women's food insecurity. Children require eating adequate food to grow and develop. Without adequate and healthy food, children lack educational opportunities and are more likely to experience mental illness. In some cultures, women may adapt to gender norms and sacrifice food to ensure their families are fed. However, food insecurity remains a worldwide concern. The FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that aims to eliminate food insecurity globally. Delegates will collaborate to discuss the root causes of food insecurity in conflict zones and create solutions for building healthier, stable, and peaceful communities.

BACKGROUND

Transporting food

One of the most pressing issues with delivering food within conflict zones is the actual process of transportation. Depending on the terrain, different vehicles may be necessary (cars, trucks, helicopters, etc.) and these can be quite expensive or require specialized people to operate.

Gas in particular can be hard to come by in conflict zones as it's used to power military property and is needed by the people to perform their everyday lives. Electricity isn't a guarantee either, and depending on the area, can be quite scarce. Both of these are needed to fuel transportation vehicles, but are not reliably available. Additionally, the food must be stored in safe and sanitary conditions so that it doesn't cause additional problems such as dysentery, cholera, or food poisoning when consumed.

There is also the issue of protecting the vehicle itself as well as the people inside them. In an attack by the Israeli government in the Gaza Strip in April, a truck from the World Central Kitchen was destroyed, killing the seven workers inside. Having protected workers is an absolute essential when it comes to transporting goods, and no one should be dying while supplying food.

Furthermore, organizing the people that are coming to the vehicles to get food is imperative, as stampedes and military attacks can and have happened.



Another incident in Gaza during February resulted in the deaths of over 100 Gazans at the hands of Israeli military forces. Creating a safe and traversable environment to transport and receive food is critical in conflict zones as there may not be any other food sources available.

Quality of Food

Often, people in conflict zones rely on readily available and cheap foods, which may not always be the most nutritious. Emergency non-perishable items such as canned foods, granola bars, tinned fish, and dried fruits are a common resource. Although emergency non-perishable items are essential for survival, they are poor quality, as they are highly processed and contain high saturated fats.

Poor quality food can result in malnutrition, which is caused by a lack of food or nutrients within the body. Most often this occurs when not enough food is consumed, but large quantities of unhealthy food can also be a cause. Malnutrition overall increases vulnerability to chronic illnesses, obesity, and diabetes. The limited availability of medical care on top of that, makes these conditions especially dangerous. Fresh vegetables, fruits, proteins (meat, fish, eggs), and whole grains are essential in a healthy diet, but are not always easily accessible.



In addition to accessing nutritious food, water access is another critical issue. With extreme climate catastrophes such as droughts and floods, water is a globally restricted source. Yet, water is used as a weapon of war, as militaries may damage water infrastructure furthering scarcity of

safe, drinkable water. With the assistance of technology to enhance agriculture, programs that promote social and economic development, and humanitarian aid, the tragedy of food insecurity can slowly start to dissipate.

Policy making

One of the biggest issues that arises in conflict zones is how to navigate the intense political climate of the area and make sure that food can get in. Food is a right to every human and is recognized in multiple international documents, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25) and the United Nations on the Rights of the Child (Article 27).

However one of the most difficult parts of getting food to these areas is collaboration between aid groups and areas in conflict, and oftentimes these agreements are rendered void in battle. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), a healthy and safe working environment is a fundamental principle at work, which extends to the workers and volunteers feeding people in conflict zones. Work in such areas always comes with a risk, but there are also direct attacks that are levied their way as exemplified most recently in the deadly Israeli attack on World Central Kitchen aid workers in the Gaza strip during February.

There are sometimes short stoppages of conflict known as humanitarian ceasefires that temporarily stop fighting and allow a free flow of food into conflict areas, but these only last for a brief amount of time, and do not guarantee an adequate amount of food for everyone after the ceasefire concludes. Creating policies that cover the protections of workers, meet food safety and navigate the intense and violent political climates of conflict zones are key to ensuring fundamental rights to people across the globe.

Food production

In the modern era, food is often mass produced with large industrial scale farming and food processing. Many countries produce a surplus of food leading to inefficient energy use and excess waste, with Americans throwing away approximately 42 tons of edible food each year. In poorer and conflict ridden areas, this often translates to waste being dumped in mass landfills near homes posing a great risk to public health. To combat this, new up and coming farming methods such as vertical farming, which greatly reduce waste, are gaining more recognition. While locally grown and organic food is a more sustainable practice than mass produced and processed foods are, this still does not address the issue of equal food distribution and safety. Lack of sanitation and safe water in war zones has a huge effect on edibility and



amount of food available. According to the UN, in 2023, approximately 2 billion people lacked clean water and 3.6 billion people did not have access to effective sanitation services. Recent data has shown there has been very little change in those numbers. Moreover, in war zones

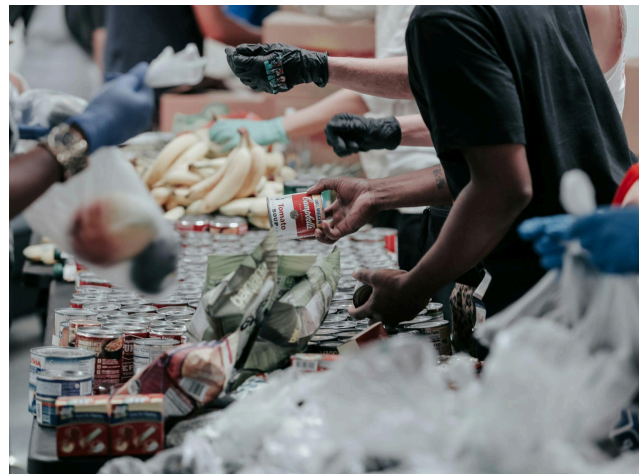
installing safe sanitation systems and providing communities with water is even costlier and riskier. Unsafe water reduces the productivity of food production in these areas, causing shortages, and along with inadequate sanitation leads to the consumption of dirty, possibly contaminated food. This increases the likelihood of famine and the spread of disease, a fact that is not helped by the fact many people across the world have limited or no access to proper cooking supplies and technology.

This leads to unsafe cooking practices that have large greenhouse gas emissions.. Lack of proper cooking materials can have a huge impact on the livelihood of women as well as anyone in the kitchen, as people are forced to use outdated and unsafe stoves, as well as open flames. This can cause cooking to be exponentially harder than it has to be and can lead to undercooked food and the harmful chemicals in meals.

UN INVOLVEMENT

The United Nations (UN) is always looking for ways to improve food security worldwide and have guaranteed protection over food and water in conflict zones. This is most prominently seen in the United Nations Crisis Relief, which uses monetary donations to send out food and other supplies to humanitarian crises across the world, including but not limited to conflict zones. Areas being helped currently include but are not limited to include Gaza, Yemen, Myanmar, Somalia, Sudan, Ukraine, and Syria. All of these places face serious challenges to their people and high amounts of conflict that stop the flow of food to their people.

There are also other organizations dedicated more broadly to helping with food insecurity such as the Food Assistance Convention, which was adopted in 2012 by Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Japan, Switzerland, and the U.S.A. in order to send food to more vulnerable populations. This is a renegotiation of an older treaty known as the Food Aid



Convention, including a larger emphasis on nutrition and additional food-related aid.

The United Nations also recognizes the importance of working with local farmers on how to best feed people and break the cycle of hunger and violence. Small-scale farming is most effective in fostering a sense of community and allowing for a greater breadth of jobs to arise alongside it, creating stable work for people to provide for

themselves and their families. The United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) helps all of this by providing grants and loans to farmers so that they may provide these benefits for their communities.

BLOC POSITIONS

African Bloc

Food insecurity is a prevalent issue in Africa. According to the World Health Organization, one out of every five people in Africa face food insecurity. Food supply chains in African nations face inflation and complications, due to conflicts such as the pandemic, climate change, and poverty. These ongoing conflicts make food difficult to access. To combat this, many African nations have invested in environmental farming practices and have focused on creating stable systems so surplus is available in times of need.

Asian Pacific Bloc

Last year an FAO report stated that the Asian Pacific region accounts for half of the world's most food insecure, with a significant amount of women suffering from food insecurity compared to men. Lack of education, employment, and health insurance are at the root of gender inequality. Because of this, women have less resources than men. Specifically in Southern Asia, pregnant women and children are the most malnourished. To steer away from this pattern, the UN encourages the Asian Pacific bloc to provide nutritious, affordable food options, expand health services, and implement gender-transformative laws.

Eastern European Bloc

In recent years the food supplies of Eastern European countries have been compromised due crop failures caused by water shortages and excessive heat. These unusual conditions have caused many Eastern European countries, such as Ukraine,

Romania, and much of the balkan region to yield far less crop than before. It is estimated that crops in Ukraine yielded 20-20 percent less than expected this year and the change in quantity faced by many countries in this block has affected trade, specifically with Western European countries, like Spain. This has the potential to be quite disruptive to food availability. While effects have not yet been detrimental, the production challenges faced in the Eastern European block could affect the global supply chain and access to food in the near future.

Western Bloc

The European Union's 5 Action Track aims to ensure food security in conflict zones. These policies include reliable access to safe and nutritious food, sustainable consumption, environmentally friendly production, equitable livelihood, and building resistance to shocks and stresses. Countries outside of the EU provide assistance through partnering with government and non-governmental food aid programs, as well as provide financial aid. With having strong economic and diplomatic influence, the Western Bloc has great potential in fighting food insecurity.

Latin Bloc and Caribbean Bloc

Countries in Latin America have incredible potential to produce large amounts of food, due to their general neutral stance in most geo-politics as well as the ability to farm massive amounts of food. The large amount of food that could potentially be produced could help with supply chain issues in the global market for food. Though it must be addressed that the mass production of food in one specific area and the subsequent shipping that would be required, would not be the most sustainable practice. However, according to UN reports throughout all of Mesoamerica, South America, and the Caribbean only about 22.5% of people can not afford healthy, nutritious foods. Severe socio-economic gaps faced by many countries cause uneven

food distribution and leave many malnourished, a fact that is not helped by the violent changes in weather and ecosystems in many areas further decreasing the food available. So despite the high potential to mass produce food, there would need to be action taken to help the current food situations in many Latin American and Caribbean countries before help could be given to others.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What are regionally appropriate foods to give out to different areas?
2. What standards of nutrition should be in place with these foods?
3. How will everything be funded?
4. What kind of work/volunteering will be needed to give out food?
5. What kinds of vehicles will need to be utilized and how will they be equipped to handle any direct confrontation?
6. How will you ensure that humanitarian treaties are kept intact?
7. How can you best avoid interference with conflict?

REFERENCES

More on the Effects of Food Insecurity:

[Empirical Challenges and Future Opportunities for Research and Policy Making on Food Security and Conflict](#)

[Hunger and Food Insecurity](#)

[2024 Global Report on Food Crises | Knowledge for policy \(europa.eu\)](#)

[World Vision Africa Hunger Crisis](#)

More on Water Access:

[WarPOR for Monitoring Agriculture in Conflict Areas](#)

[Water Scarcity, the Climate Crisis and Global Food Security: A Call for Collaborative Action](#)

More on the United Nations Work Combating Food Insecurity:

[Learning From Conflict Management and Peace Sustaining Work at FAO](#)

[Action Track 5 EU](#)

[UNICEF Calls for More Investment as South Asia Remains a Global Epicentre for Undernourished and Anaemic Adolescent Girls and Women](#)

[FAO Report: In Asia-Pacific Millions of People Have been Unable to Afford a Healthy Diet](#)

[Hunger Numbers Stubbornly High: UN Report](#)

[Food Assistance Convention](#)

[Breaking the vicious circle of hunger and conflict | United Nations](#)

[About IFAD](#)