



## **Dear Delegates,**

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2015 Montessori Model United Nations Conference.

The following pages intend to guide you in the research of the topics that will be debated at MMUN 2015 in committee sessions. Please note this guide only provides the basis for your investigation. It is your responsibility to find as much information necessary on the topics and how they relate to the country you represent. Such information should help you write your Position Paper, where you need to cite the references in the text and finally list all references in the Modern Language Association (MLA) format.

The more information and understanding you acquire on the two topics, the more you will be able to influence the Resolution writing process through debates [formal and informal caucuses], and the MMUN experience as a whole. Please feel free to contact us if and when you face challenges in your research or formatting your Position Papers.

We encourage you to learn all you can about your topics first and then study your country with regard to the two selected topics. Please remember that both committee members need to be well versed and ready to debate both topics.

Enjoy researching and writing your Position Papers.

We look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

MMUN Secretariat Team  
[info@montessori-mun.org](mailto:info@montessori-mun.org)



## **FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION**

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Achieving food security for all is at the heart of FAO's efforts – to make sure people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives.

Our three main goals are: the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; the elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all; and, the sustainable management and utilization of natural resources, including land, water, air, climate and genetic resources for the benefit

of present and future generations.

Source: <http://www.fao.org/about/en/>

# Malnutrition

## Topic Background

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Food is essential for human survival. However, for many of the world's poor and victims of conflict and natural disasters, finding enough to eat is a real struggle. The number one health risk worldwide is malnutrition, the condition that occurs when your body does not get enough nutrients. Though malnutrition can sometimes be caused by medical conditions, the most common cause of malnutrition in the developing world is an inadequate or unbalanced diet. Malnutrition continues to be a significant problem all over the world, especially among children. Poverty, natural disasters, political problems, and war all contribute to malnutrition and starvation.

In some cases, malnutrition is very mild and causes no symptoms. However, sometimes it can be so severe that the damage done to the body is permanent. Children who suffer from malnutrition do not grow properly, and may become underdeveloped in terms of both physical handicaps and brain function. If untreated, malnutrition and starvation can lead to mental or physical disability, illness, and even death. In contrast, proper nutrition is a powerful tool for health and development. People who are well nourished are more likely to be healthy, productive and able to learn. Good nutrition benefits families, their communities and the world as a whole.

Since the mid-1990s, the number of chronically hungry people in developing countries has increased at a rate of almost four million people per year. Chronic hunger affects more than 800 million people. There are more than 1 billion people worldwide who are undernourished. A person who is undernourished does not eat enough calories to meet his or her daily minimum needs to perform everyday activities. Daily undernourishment and chronic hunger are less publicized than the food emergencies that result from wars and natural disasters, but they account for more than ninety-two percent of world hunger.

When people live on less than the recommended daily amount of 2,100 calories for long periods of time, the body compensates for the lack of energy by reducing physical and mental activities. When people are hungry, they cannot concentrate, do not take initiative, and become lethargic. Hunger also weakens the immune system. Children are especially vulnerable to malnutrition, which weakens their immune systems and can cause them to die from common infections like measles and diarrhea. Of the nearly 11 million children who die every year before reaching the age of five, 53% of these deaths are associated with malnutrition.

There is an abundance of food in the world – more than enough to feed the total population of all countries. However, more than one in seven people are hungry and one in three children is underweight. Most of the world's hungry live in developing countries. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), there are more than 1 billion hungry people in the world and 915 million of them are in developing countries. Most of them, about 75%, belong to farming communities dependent on the land for their livelihoods. Malnutrition is not just the result of too little food, but is based on a combination of factors.

Malnutrition is most commonly seen in the Sub-Saharan area within Africa as well as parts of Asia.<sup>1</sup> Malnutrition is considered a slow, quiet killer among children, but can be prevented if proper measures are followed.

## **Past International Action**

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In 2000 the UN created the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight goals for the UN to improve the world by 2015. The first MDG aims to “Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger”. It stated that access to food is a basic human right. Everyone is entitled to the protection of his or her basic human rights. The United Nations has addressed the issue of human rights on many occasions. In addition, Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that all people have the right to a decent standard of living including access to food, clothing, and housing.

The World Food Programme has worked to provide pregnant women with the proper vitamins and nutritional assistance to avoid malnutrition in newborns. Their concern carries through the first two years of life for children as they monitor the amount of food intake. The WFP works in partnerships with UNICEF and other groups to ensure proper nutritional care for children. Though they have implemented creative and unique ways to keep civilians healthier, greater steps must be taken to spread assistance to those in need.<sup>1</sup> The 1995 World Food Summit outlined the basics revolving around malnutrition and minimal solutions, but the UN has produced few solid instructions.<sup>1</sup>

Under an agreement with the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Food Program (WFP) addresses moderate malnutrition while UNICEF focuses on severe malnutrition. By treating moderate malnutrition, WFP tries to prevent children from slipping into severe malnutrition. In many emergency settings, there may be eight or ten times as many children suffering from moderate malnutrition as those suffering from severe acute malnutrition. WFP has a strong field presence in most of the world’s food insecure regions, with food distribution structures are in place in over 70 countries. WFP tries to tailor its responses to meet specific nutritional needs, from more food in general to specific vitamins or minerals.

## **Possible Solutions**

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The UN actively works to improve the lives of those with little food or inability to purchase nutritional food. Since malnutrition has had such a large effect on African and Asian life, this committee will work to find creative but logical solutions to alleviate the suffering that takes place among underprivileged children. Delegates should consider delivery and distribution of food and vitamins, as well as the development of specific food plans for each civilian. The rights of a child are obviously taken in great consideration when handling minors and should not be forgotten as time progresses on this issue. Solutions should focus on the places and people that suffer the most from malnutrition in both emergency and chronic situations. Another important issue is funding and sustainability of these anti-malnutrition programs.

With a disorder resulting in the death of such young and innocent children, it is our duty as citizens of the world to provide them with defense against dangerous issues. It is absolutely necessary to ensure the safety and health of these children to guarantee that the world has wholesome leaders for the future.

## Further Research

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### Guiding Questions

1. Does your nation have a history with malnutrition? If so, what steps has it taken to alleviate it?
2. What is the most effective way to deliver and distribute vitamins and food?
3. What sort of research or supplements can be used to further assist those suffering from malnutrition?

### Research Sources

- World Food Programme malnutrition page: <http://www.wfp.org/hunger/malnutrition>
- Food and Agricultural Organization hunger page: <http://www.fao.org/hunger/en/>
- 2012 World Hunger and Poverty Facts and Statistics:  
<http://www.worldhunger.org/articles/Learn/world%20hunger%20facts%202002.htm>

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1 Cora, Cat. *BrainyQuote*. Xplore, n.d. Web. 19 Aug. 2012.

<<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/c/catcora442586.html>>.

2 "World Food Programme Fighting Hunger Worldwide." *What Is Malnutrition?* N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Aug. 2012.

<<http://www.wfp.org/hunger/malnutrition>>.

3 "Fighting Malnutrition." *Fighting Malnutrition*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Aug. 2012.

<<http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Magazines/Bulletin/Bull502/50205814344.html>>.

4 "World Food Programme Fighting Hunger Worldwide." *How WFP Fights Malnutrition*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Aug. 2012.

<<http://www.wfp.org/nutrition/how-wfp-fights-malnutrition>>.

5 "World Food Summit." *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Aug. 2012.

<<http://www.fao.org/wfs/resource/english/ungarese.htm>>.