

# Special Conference 1 on Good Governance

Addressing the food insecurity caused by the  
discrepancy in global distribution



<b>Forum:</b>	Special Conference 1 on Good Governance
<b>Issue:</b>	Addressing the food insecurity caused by the discrepancy in global distribution
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## Introduction

In 1996, the World Food Summit defined food security as existing “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life”. The problem of food insecurity caused by discrepancy in global distribution is severe enough for the internationally established Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to specifically target the issue in both 1.A (Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day) and 1.C (Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger). Food availability, food utilization, food access, and food use are factors to take into account when talking about food security. Having the means as well as the ability to purchase sufficient food on a consistent basis is also called being “food secure”; not having to live with fear of hunger and starvation. To many of us, this fear is something we need not worry about. However, there are around 795 million people, about one in nine people in the world that do not have enough food to eat. During the 2015 MUNISH conference, the Special Conference 1 committee will address the food insecurity caused by discrepancy in global distribution and undoubtedly come up with great solutions for the issue.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Hunger

Hunger is a compelling need, a painful sensation or state of weakness caused by not consuming enough food to meet energy requirements.

### Malnutrition

A condition that occurs when a person's diet does not provide them with the adequate amounts of nutrients, vitamins and minerals that the body needs to maintain healthy (organ) functions.

## Food security

A condition related to the supply and access of food. Food security, the World Food Conference said, is the "availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices".

## Food availability

Enough quantities of food available on a consistent basis.

## Food access

Having sufficient resources to obtain needed foods for a nutritious diet.

## Food use

Using food appropriately, based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care.

## Food distribution

The transport of foods from suppliers and producers to customers and consumers.

## General Overview

In a world where 1.7 billion people are considered to be obese or overweight due to a daily calorie intake that is sometimes up to seven times as high as the minimum required intake, the massive amount of people who suffer from malnutrition and food insecurity is a paradox like no other.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has said that hunger is the single gravest threat to the world's public health. The FAO quantifies hunger by measuring a population's average food consumption. If this is less than the pre-determined level based on what is necessary to be healthy, they are undernourished. The main cause of hunger is food insecurity. There are two main types of food insecurity: chronic, and transitory. *Chronic food insecurity* is defined as "the long-term, persistent lack of adequate food." What this means is that families are not able to, on a consistent basis, buy enough food to feed all members of the household. An estimated 842 million people were suffering from chronic hunger in the years 2011 to 2013. *Transitory food insecurity* is usually a result of instability in food prices,



food production, or the reduction in household incomes. Since the food market is responsible for making food prices vary and change, food insecurity that is based on the market is less likely to occur in high-income countries as opposed to low-income countries.

## Economy

The economic and financial crisis in 2008 caused social unrest and economic instability. Entire systems broke down because of this, in both less economically developed countries (LEDCs) and more economically developed countries (MEDCs). An important result of this was that food prices rocketed, leaving people in less well faring nations unable to pay for even the basic necessities. These basic necessities are defined as the absolute minimum amount of resources that are necessary for physical well-being, usually in terms of consumption goods. Different nations need different necessities. To help and support these nations, aid is most often provided in the form of food, or by helping a nation's government in finding ways in which a society will be able to carry its own weight in the future, rather than just helping to meet their basic needs by providing food.

## Climate dependency

Food prices are often linked directly to the harvest results, and these are dependent on the weather. This means that in some countries, bad weather and harvest failure have dramatic consequences for the population as they depend on the income of their agricultural production to provide them with sufficient funds to purchase necessities such as food. Even if, in these areas where a sudden climate change ruins the harvest, there is enough food left to feed the population, most farmers and people with low incomes cannot pay for the food. The problem is then no longer the availability, but the access to food. A change in climate can influence any particular crop, depending on its optimal temperature for growth and reproduction. The most important staple crop to be affected by climate change is wheat. It's consumed universally, and grown all over the world. However, because this crop is so sensitive to heat, fluctuating temperatures may decrease wheat yields by up to 2%, causing a rise in price and leaving many of the world's inhabitants unable to purchase wheat or certain wheat products.

## Rise in demand for meat and dairy

Another reason for the lack of proper food distribution is the growing demand for meat and dairy products. To supply enough products for the growing demand of these two categories, more animals are needed. This in turn requires the amount of cereal to feed the livestock to increase as well, causing the price of grains to rocket. Those that live in LEDCs



will often find the new prices too expensive and cannot pay. At the moment, today's world requires 2.1 billion tons of cereals to sustain the people. If the demand for cereals, both as food and animal feed, continues to grow the way it has, it may reach up to 3 billion tons by 2025.

The amount of water and food required to sustain livestock and keep them in prime condition for growth and reproduction is 16 times more grain than they produce as meat, measured per unit of food. The production of a single pound of beef takes 5,214 gallons of water. Not beef for a whole year, but one pound. This is used for the tremendous amounts of water needed to feed a cow over its lifetime, plus water for cleaning, drinking, and processing. The production for one pound of potatoes is only 24 gallons, making it 99.6% more sustainable.

### Government influence

One way in which governments seek to assist national farmers is by creating a set price floor for the agricultural market. This is often done to insure a farmer's livelihood and in the hopes of stabilizing, increasing and maintaining access to food as well as food security. While these goals all seem reasonable and have good intentions, they bring with them an array of problems. Subsidizing crops and controlling food prices for the sake of protecting agriculture and farmers have both positive and negative consequences. An alternative to relying on these government subsidies would be to increasingly invest in new methods for sustainable farming.

## Major Parties Involved and Their Views

### Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

This organization is an agency of the United Nations that focusses on reducing food insecurity and making sure everyone has access to food. The FAO has outlined the following as priorities for the coming biennium:

1. Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition – contribute to the eradication of hunger by facilitating policies and political commitments to support food security and by making sure that up-to-date information about hunger and nutrition challenges and solutions is available and accessible.
2. Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable – promote evidence-based policies and practices to support highly productive agricultural



sectors (crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries), while ensuring that the natural resource base does not suffer in the process.

3. Reduce rural poverty – help the rural poor gain access to the resources and services they need – including rural employment and social protection – to forge a path out of poverty.
4. Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems – help to build safe and efficient food systems that support smallholder agriculture and reduce poverty and hunger in rural areas.
5. Increase the resilience of livelihoods from disasters – help countries to prepare for natural and human-caused disasters by reducing their risk and enhancing the resilience of their food and agricultural systems.

### United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

This United Nations program provides long-term humanitarian and developmental assistance to children and their mothers in developing countries. This organization promotes the rights and wellbeing of children. They wish to overcome obstacles such as poverty, violence, disease and discrimination.

### Committee on World Food Security

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was set up alongside the FAO in 1974. This intergovernmental body is a forum responsible for reviewing and following up the food security policies. Their vision is to be the most inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all those involved to work together in establishing food security and nutrition for all. The Committee sends in reports to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) annually.

### World Food Programme (WFP)

This humanitarian agency is completely funded by donations from governments, companies and individuals. They focus on supplying those in need with food, and work together closely with the FAO.

## Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
October 16th, 1945	The Food and Agriculture Organization was established in 1945. They are

	leading international efforts to defeat hunger, and are currently an agency of the United Nations.
November 16 <sup>th</sup> , 1974	The United Nations pass the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition. In it, all governments preset consequently and solemnly proclaim that “every man, woman and child has the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition in order to develop fully and maintain their physical mental faculties”.
October 16 <sup>th</sup> , 1981	The first World Food Day takes place. On this day, the founding of the FAO as mentioned above is celebrated. People around the world come together on this special occasion to remind themselves of the importance of eradication hunger.
2000	In 2000, following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established. There are eight goals in total, and member states are committed to achieving them by 2015. The issue most relevant to this committee is: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

## UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- General Assembly 83rd plenary meeting, 20 December 1988, A/RES/43/191
- Agriculture development and food security, 22 December 2008, A/RES/63/235
- The right to food, 28 December 2008, A/RES/63/187
- World Food Summit, November 13-17 1996, A/RES/50/109

## Possible Solutions

To establish global food security, the international community will need to focus on achieving an array of goals. Research has shown that with the growth of populations and the rise in incomes, the demand for food will only increase. The total world population is expected to increase by over a third between 2009 and 2050. This will be a total of around 2.3 billion people. To meet the increasingly growling demand for food for the population in 2025, a number that is assumed to be around 9.1 billion people, requires agricultural productivity as well as food production to grow and increase by around 70% between 2005-2007 and 2050. There are many things to consider when trying to improve food distribution. A couple of examples: How can the United Nations address and tackle the underlying



problems that cause hunger and malnutrition? What agricultural/economic policies are needed to ensure an equal market for all? How can countries work together and agree on these new regulations while keeping the livelihood of their own farmers safe?

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon proposed a global 'Zero Hunger Challenge' during the June 2012 conference on Sustainable Development. This challenge will have five objectives:

1. 100% access to food for all, all year round
2. End to stunting among children under two because of lack of nutrients during pregnancy and in the early days of life
3. Ensuring sustainable food systems
4. Doubling smallholder productivity and income
5. Reduction in food loss, at the farmer level, through lack of suitable storage and reduction of waste by retailers and consumers

If member states were to further develop and improve regulations, usage and production of genetically modified foods, it could also prove to be a possible solution in solving food shortage. Through thorough research, scientists have speculated that an international shift to a more sustainable way of producing food will also have beneficial outcomes for providing food security for everyone. An example of a sustainable crop that could alter the food industry is soy. Soy yields approximately 365 pounds of usable protein per acre of farmland, compared to 82 pounds of protein for milk and 78 for eggs. Raising soy production will be more cost-efficient than raising the production of animals for dairy products, eggs and meat. Soy could play a significant role in ensuring food security, delivering the nutritional benefits of one of the most sustainable crops. Two other factors to look into are sustainable farming methods and the controlling of pests. Cultivating, planting, harvesting and ploughing methods can and should be improved in order for agricultural produce to reach its peak.

Climate and weather changes cannot be changed. However, by using technology it can be predicted and appropriate measures can be taken. When it comes to controlling pests however, change is certainly possible. By using pesticides, farmers can change the outcome that pests have on produce. Reducing the risks of pesticides should be a major point of focus when developing and improving pesticides to protect crops against insects, diseases and weeds.



Both agricultural production as well as meat production are dependent on water. Most agriculturally productive regions of the world have sufficient natural rainfall to allow agriculture to flourish. In countries where rainfall is not consistent or where farmers depend on irregular rainfall, such as monsoons, food production, distribution and thus access to food are closely tied to the weather conditions. An agrarian country that can be used as an example for this is India. Around the months from June to September, the southwest monsoon provides the country with approximately 80% of its annual precipitation. A bad monsoon season has a negative impact not only on food production, but on the economy as well. Due to new technologies being used and developed there have been various low cost technological innovations that will help reduce the amount of water needed for farming crops such as for example wheat rice and wheat. GW-11 is an example of this. Farmers in Gujarat, India, have been pilot testing this new variety of wheat that is drought resistant and produces comparable wheat to the traditional variety. Data is currently being collected and processed to analyse the production versus the required irrigation in comparison to traditional wheat.

Another example of a new innovation is the hydroponic method of gardening without soil. Plants are grown in chemical nutrient solutions instead of in soil. A hydroponic farmer needs only 650 square meters of greenhouse space to grow 50,000 pounds of tomatoes. On average, hydroponic operators use 5% less water to produce the same amount of food than used in traditional agriculture.

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## Appendix or Appendices

- I. A map showing the percentage of undernourished citizens in each nation.  
<http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/communications/wfp275057.pdf>
- II. The Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition.  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/EradicationOfHungerAndMalnutrition.aspx>
- III. These are the Millennium Development Goals that specifically target the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.  
<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml>
- IV. The Food Price Index, which measures the monthly change in international prices of food commodities.  
<http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/foodpricesindex/en/>
- V. Overview of countries and the death rates by malnutrition.  
<http://www.worldlifeexpectancy.com/cause-of-death/malnutrition/by-country/>
- VI. An introduction to the basics of food insecurity, written by the FAO. (I suggest you all read this, as I find it very informing!)  
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/al936e/al936e00.pdf>
- VII. Guide to global agriculture by the FAO.  
[http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/wsfs/docs/Issues\\_papers/HLEF2050\\_Global\\_Agriculture.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/wsfs/docs/Issues_papers/HLEF2050_Global_Agriculture.pdf)
- VIII. United Nations report on agriculture development and food security.  
[http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/susdevtopics/sdt\\_pdfs/SG%20Report%20on%20Agriculture%20Development%20and%20Food%20Security.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/susdevtopics/sdt_pdfs/SG%20Report%20on%20Agriculture%20Development%20and%20Food%20Security.pdf)
- IX. Human Rights Council resolution on the right to food.  
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