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| <b>Forum:</b>           | Special Conference on Eradicating Poverty and World Hunger                 |
| <b>Issue:</b>           | Ensuring adequate universal food supply and preventing global malnutrition |
| <b>Student Officer:</b> | Danae – Maria Karantanou   |
| <b>Position:</b>        | President  |

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## PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Danae – Maria Karantanou and it is my great honor to serve as the President of the Special Conference on Eradicating Poverty and World Hunger of the 7<sup>th</sup> session of Platon School Model United Nations. I am currently in 11<sup>th</sup> grade attending the German School of Athens and I have so far participated in nine MUN conferences, with PS-MUN 2017 being my tenth.

Even in the seemingly affluent society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our world is still a long way from completely eradicating poverty and world hunger. Nowadays, approximately 1.2 billion people are living below the poverty line and almost 800 million people in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) do not have access to adequate and nutritious food, which is a basic right according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The right to food is a basic human right, which most of us take for granted. However, sufficient food supplies are not available for everyone, and therefore, creating a world free from hunger and malnutrition remains a goal unachieved. Moreover, despite the progress that has been made during the last decades in eradicating poverty, the amount of people suffering and struggling with extreme poverty and hunger is unacceptably high. Hence, the reduction of poverty in all its various forms and dimensions is still one of the greatest global challenges. Thus, there is a need for immediate action to be taken, and we must realize that each and every one of us can play a key role in achieving one of the world's most important goals.

Given the significance of this year's Special Conference, I would like to congratulate you on your decision to be a member of it. However, due to the challenging nature of our committee, I would like to stress that as the representatives of your countries you are requested to conduct your own research on all four topics and be prepared to contribute to the debate. In addition, I would also like to remind you that although the role of this Study Guide is to introduce you to the main aspects of the topic and guide you throughout your preparation, you are discouraged from entirely relying on it as your single source of information, and you can always use the links in the bibliography to broaden your knowledge.

As a last remark, the Presidency of the Special Conference urges you to carefully go through the Rules of Procedure of PS-MUN, keeping in mind that any kind of inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated throughout the three days of the conference. Nevertheless, do not hesitate to contact us, may any questions arise. My personal e-mail is: [danaekarant@gmail.com](mailto:danaekarant@gmail.com), and your messages are welcome.

I'm looking forward to a successful conference and cooperation,

Sincerely,

Danae- Maria Karantanou

## INTRODUCING THE TOPIC

One of the most crucial human rights is the right to food. Human life is inextricably linked to the provision of proper nutrition, thus, rendering scarcity of food a fundamental threat to human existence.

The most common and deadly forms of hunger are considered to be chronic hunger and malnutrition and according to the World Health Organization (WHO), roughly one in three people who are suffering from chronic hunger will either die or have disabilities in the future.

The dimensions of extreme hunger and malnutrition in today's world are alarming; an estimated 795 million people in the world are deprived of access to food, most of them living in LEDCs, where approximately 13% of the population is undernourished. According to World Food Programme statistics, Asia is considered to be the continent with the



highest hunger rates, with two thirds of its population suffering from lack of food. The region of Sub-Saharan Africa is also dealing with a high percentage of malnutrition, with one person in four being undernourished. Additionally, 3.1 million children are dying every year as a result of hunger-related causes and almost 100 million children in LEDCs are malnourished.

Hunger and chronic undernourishment are considered to be simultaneously causes and effects of poverty, which affect more than 925 million people globally. There are five main causes that lead to most of the world's hunger. These include poverty, armed conflicts, over-consumption of food by wealthier nations, and at the same time a continuously growing population in LEDCs, unemployment and any kind of discrimination against the vulnerable. Moreover, food insecurity has severe effects

both on individuals and countries; undernourished women are more likely to give birth to underweight infants, resulting in an increase in levels of infant mortality in regions where high percentages of chronic hunger is present. In addition, an undernourished child has a weakened immune system and is therefore unable to survive illnesses such as diarrhea, malaria and measles. For the nearly 67 million underweight children, studies have shown that activities such as going to school will be extremely hard relative to other children. Therefore, there will be a severe impact on their future, which will make it even more difficult for them to escape poverty. This condition is officially named the poverty cycle, and is an issue of primary concern for organizations and governments around the world.

It should be made clear that chronic hunger is a very dangerous, persistent and even deadly condition that can affect generations of people in the long term, mainly because the problems caused by it go far beyond the lack of food and money. To successfully deal with this phenomenon and achieve freedom from hunger, international funding for eradicating hunger, ensuring adequate universal food supply and preventing malnourishment needs to increase to a scale corresponding to the problem and to be improved under the right terms and conditions.

## KEY-TERMS

### Hunger

Not having enough to eat to meet energy requirements. Hunger can lead to malnutrition, but absence of hunger does not imply absence of malnutrition.<sup>1</sup>

### Malnutrition

A term used to refer to any condition in which the body does not receive enough nutrients for proper function. Malnutrition may range from mild to severe and life-threatening. It can be a result of starvation, caused by an inadequate intake of calories, or by a deficiency of one particular nutrient (for example, vitamin C deficiency). Malnutrition can also occur because a person cannot properly digest or absorb nutrients from the food they consume, due to certain medical conditions for instance. Malnutrition remains a significant global problem, especially in LEDCs.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Hunger Glossary | WFP | United Nations World Food Programme - Fighting Hunger Worldwide." Hunger Glossary | WFP | United Nations World Food Programme - Fighting Hunger Worldwide. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2017. <<http://www.wfp.org/hunger/glossary>>.

<sup>2</sup> "Definition of Malnutrition." MedicineNet. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2017. <<http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=88521>>.

## Poverty

Condition where people's basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter are not being met. Poverty is generally of two types: (1) Absolute poverty is synonymous with destitution and occurs when people cannot obtain adequate resources (measured in terms of calories or nutrition) to support a minimum level of physical health. Absolute poverty means about the same everywhere, and can be eradicated as demonstrated by some countries. (2) Relative poverty occurs when people do not enjoy a certain minimum level of living standards as determined by a government (and enjoyed by the bulk of the population) that vary from country to country, sometimes within the same country.<sup>3</sup>

## Micronutrient Deficiency

A lack or shortage of a micronutrient (vitamins or minerals) that is essential in small amounts for proper growth and metabolism. People are often said to suffer from “hidden hunger” when they consume enough calories, but suffer from micronutrient deficiencies. This form of hunger may not be visibly apparent in an individual, but it increases morbidity and mortality and also has negative impacts on other aspects of health, cognitive development and economic development.<sup>4</sup>

## Right to Food

The right to adequate food as a human right was first formally recognized by the United Nations in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, as a part of the right to a decent standard of living. In the UDHR Article 25 it was stated that:

*“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> "Good One to Know!" BusinessDictionary.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2017. <<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/poverty.html>>.

<sup>4</sup> "Hunger Glossary | WFP | United Nations World Food Programme - Fighting Hunger Worldwide." Hunger Glossary | WFP | United Nations World Food Programme - Fighting Hunger Worldwide. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2017. <<http://www.wfp.org/hunger/glossary>>.

<sup>5</sup> "About Right to Food." Right to Food: About Right to Food. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2017. <<http://www.fao.org/righttofood/about-right-to-food/en/>>.

## Chronic hunger

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations defines chronic hunger as undernourishment caused by not ingesting enough energy to lead a normal, active life.

The definition of hunger has been a subject of debate, especially as it is linked to food security. At the heart of the debate is a disagreement among scholars and practitioners on whether hunger is physiological or social. As a result, there are several definitions in use. However, the most commonly cited definition of hunger comes from the 1990 Life Sciences Research Organization Report on Nutritional Assessment (Anderson 1990-1598):

- a) physiological hunger: the un-easy or painful sensation caused by lack of food;
- b) resource-constrained hunger: the recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food.<sup>6</sup>

## Undernourishment

An indicator of inadequate dietary energy intake (based on FAO's definition of hunger, characterized as consuming less than a minimum level of kilocalories) that is assessed at the population level using national food balance sheets to determine the supply of dietary energy available to a given population and modeling of how that energy is distributed across the population.<sup>7</sup>

## HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### The causes of malnutrition

Malnutrition is a condition caused by lack of nutrients in one's diet. This can happen either due to an insufficient diet or due to specific problems in absorbing nutrients from food. There are certain illnesses and infections, which are directly linked to malnourishment. Moreover, a combination of a disease and malnutrition weakens the organism and especially the metabolism of a person, leading to a cycle of infection and undernourishment, resulting to vulnerability to illnesses. Despite the physical factors, which may cause malnutrition, there are several social factors and situations that can contribute to malnutrition.

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<sup>6</sup> "Chronic Hunger (linked to Food Security)." Medanth - Chronic Hunger (linked to Food Security). N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2017. <[https://medanth.wikispaces.com/Chronic+Hunger+\(linked+to+food+security\)](https://medanth.wikispaces.com/Chronic+Hunger+(linked+to+food+security))>.

<sup>7</sup> "Hunger Glossary | WFP | United Nations World Food Programme - Fighting Hunger Worldwide." Hunger Glossary | WFP | United Nations World Food Programme - Fighting Hunger Worldwide. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2017. <<http://www.wfp.org/hunger/glossary>>.

Most crucial food and nutrition crises do not only occur because of a lack of food, but

rather because of a lack of money that prevents people from obtaining enough food or a lack of access to it. This could be a result of non-availability of food in markets, difficulty in accessing markets due to lack of transportation and poor financial resources. Lack of safe drinking water in combination with poor sanitation increases vulnerability to infectious diseases, which, as previously mentioned, are direct causes of malnutrition. Armed conflicts are also a main cause of food insecurity. People living in areas of such conflict often lose their access to food, even to their own farms and businesses.

Furthermore, malnutrition is an effect of climate change; natural disasters such as floods, droughts, cyclones etc. are a result of climate change and their effects are disastrous. According to recent UN studies, the decrease in agricultural production and development caused, either directly or indirectly, by such natural disasters, will lead to a dramatic increase in the already high number of people suffering from hunger and malnutrition.

**ONE IN FOUR**  
OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN ARE  
**MALNOURISHED**

**2.6 MILLION**  
HUNGRY CHILDREN  
**DIE EVERY YEAR**

THAT'S ONE CHILD EVERY  
**12 SECONDS**

**MALNOURISHED CHILDREN**

- ARE SHORTER AND WEAKER
- MAY HAVE LOWER IQs
- EARN MUCH LESS WHEN THEY GROW UP

**MALNUTRITION**  
COSTS THE WORLD  
**£95 BILLION**  
**A YEAR**  
IN HEALTHCARE  
AND LOST PRODUCTIVITY

UNLESS WE ACT NOW  
**HALF A BILLION**  
**CHILDREN**  
WILL BECOME MALNOURISHED  
OVER THE NEXT  
**15 YEARS**

Save the Children

[The consequences of malnutrition](#)

Malnutrition affects all systems of the human body, especially the immune- and nervous system and it is among the most life-threatening conditions. More specifically, muscles are unable to work correctly and they become inactive, the undernourished person often suffers from apathy, numerous forms of depression, introversion, self-neglect and stress that affects the mechanisms of response of the human body, there is a reduction in fertility, there is a higher risk of over- or dehydration and the organism fails to regulate body temperature, which can lead to hypothermia. Moreover, an undernourished person needs longer recovery time after an infection, relatively to people with an adequate diet.

## THE COST OF MALNUTRITION



Children are even more vulnerable when it comes to undernourishment, having to deal with symptoms, such as but not limited to: stunting, delayed sexual development, reduced strength, impaired intellectual development and increased risk of diseases in the future.

Apart from the serious impact on a person's health, the economy of a country is also affected by malnutrition, because the high percentage of people suffering from this widespread condition prevents economic development and increases poverty both directly and indirectly. Additionally, studies have shown that countries with a low per capita income have the highest amount of people affected by undernourishment.

### [Ensuring food security](#)

Food security is a condition related to the availability of food supplies, and individuals' access to it. Food security has been an issue of utmost importance for millennia, according to evidence of ancient civilizations such as China and Egypt using granaries organized by central authorities, to distribute food in times of famine.

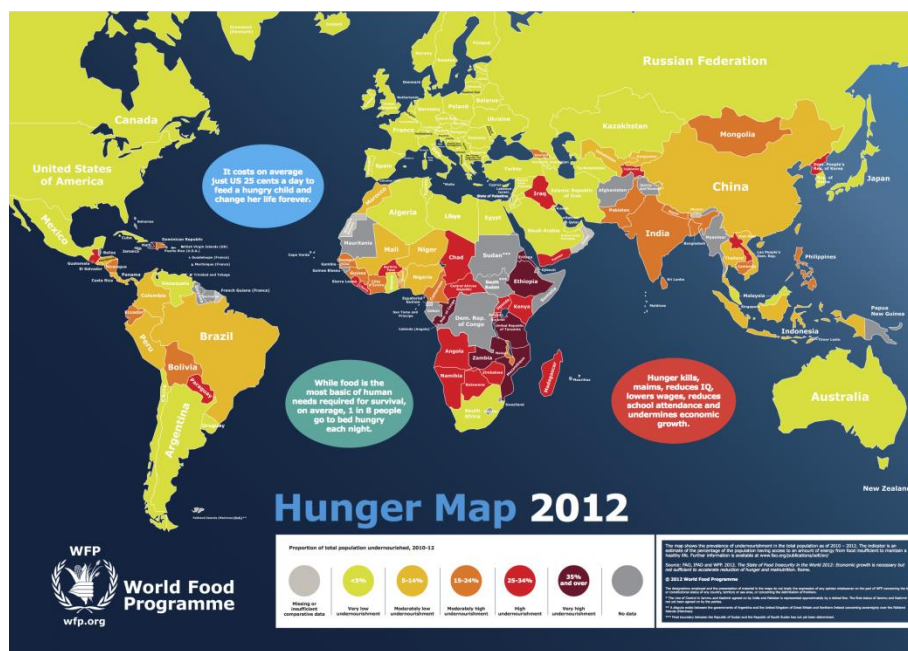
In 1974, at the World Food Conference, the term "food security" was defined with an emphasis on supply: "Food security is the availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices".<sup>8</sup> Later on a more accurate definition of the term was determined, as details regarding demand and access to food

<sup>8</sup> "Chapter 2. Food Security: Concepts and Measurement[21]." Chapter 2. Food Security: Concepts and Measurement[21]. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2017. <<http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/y4671e/y4671e06.htm>>.



were introduced. The final report of the 1996 World Food Summit states that food security "exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life".<sup>9</sup>

Food security is not just about getting everyone enough nutritious food. It is also about access, ending waste, and moving toward sustainable, efficient production and consumption. The world will need about 50 percent more food by 2030; to produce enough food sustainably is a global challenge. Irrigation and other investments in agriculture and rural development can help millions of smallholder farmers earn a better living, provide enough nutritious food for growing populations, and build pathways to sustainable future growth.



Food security exists when all people have access to sufficient amounts of safe, nutritious and affordable food to provide the foundation for active and healthy lives. Food security is a complex problem given interconnections and interdependencies in a global food system that is fundamentally dependent on soil, precipitation and water availability, climate and a host of services the earth provides and at the same time influenced significantly by trade, urbanization, changing demographics, and energy, water and land use policy.

As the world population continues to grow, much more effort and innovation will be urgently needed in order to sustainably increase agricultural production, improve the global supply chain, decrease food losses and waste, and ensure that all who are

<sup>9</sup> "Issues Brief 9 - Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture ..: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform." United Nations. United Nations, n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2017. <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=316&menu=124>>.



suffering from hunger and malnutrition have access to nutritious food - it's not simply about feeding over 800 million people who go to bed hungry every night.

Beyond adequate calories intake, proper nutrition has other dimensions that deserve attention, including micronutrient availability and healthy diets. Inadequate micronutrient intake by mothers and infants can have long-term developmental impacts. Additionally, unhealthy diets and lifestyles are closely linked to the growing incidence of non-communicable diseases in both MEDCs and LEDCs.

## COUNTRIES INVOLVED IN THE ISSUE

### Nigeria

Nigeria is one of the places with the highest rates of malnutrition. It is true that there is a family nutritional program that was established in 2008, and is ongoing, but 1/6 of the population suffers from chronic hunger, wherein there are 3.8 million of children that die yearly. Very alarmingly, according to calculations, if this continues in the next 15 years, 450 million people will suffer from this pandemic.

### Brazil

Over the past decades, Brazil has made continuous efforts to reduce malnutrition, and its commitment has paid off, thanks to the mobilization of civil society, the allocation of resources to nutrition, and political commitment followed by action. Stunting rates declined from 19% in 1989 to 7% in 2007, and wasting rates are very low at 2%. The law dictates freedom from hunger and malnutrition, and access to adequate and healthy food. Despite recent improvements in income distribution, poverty remains widespread, and food remains a problem in some communities. Students in Brazilian public schools receive at least one meal per day as part of the National School Feeding Programme. Since 2009, a minimum of 30 percent of the program's food must be purchased from smallholder farmers, which supports farmers and increases access to fresh, nutritious food.

### India

India is home to 194.6 million undernourished people but the situation is gradually improving and rates of hunger are dropping. The country is home to over one third of the world's stunted (chronically malnourished) children, 38.7% of which are under the age of 5. Hunger has been dropping at a moderate rate since 1990. Yet progress in reducing stunting needs further improvement and still lags behind many poorer countries. India's economic growth has not been fully translated into higher food consumption, let alone better diets overall, suggesting that the poor and hungry may have failed to benefit from overall growth. The rates of obesity and diabetes increased between 2010 and 2014. Today, 9.5 percent of adults are diagnosed with diabetes and 4.9 percent with obesity. The state of Maharashtra's Nutrition Mission – a public

declaration of intent to reduce malnutrition – has led to a rapid decline in stunting rates. Subsequently, five other states have launched missions based on the Maharashtra model.

## Afghanistan



Afghanistan is facing enormous humanitarian challenges after three decades of war, civil unrest and recurring natural disasters. Afghanistan is one of the world's poorest countries, ranking 169 out of 187 countries in the Human Development Index (2012). More than 1.5 million people in Afghanistan are severely food insecure – an increase of more than 317,000 since last year. Another 7.3 million people – more than one in every four Afghans – are moderately food insecure. More than a third of children under five years old, as well as 21 percent of women of reproductive age, are underweight. 5.3 million people are protein deficient. Food insecurity is exacerbated by political instability, conflict and recurring disasters. Approximately 400,000 people are seriously affected each year by disasters, such as drought and floods.

## Indonesia

Despite economic growth, 87 million Indonesians remain vulnerable to food insecurity. There has been no progress in reducing stunting between 2007 (36.8 percent) and 2013 (37.2 percent). Indonesia has the fifth-highest number of stunted children in the world, at 37%. That means 9.5 million children under five are malnourished. More than three million or 12 percent of children under five years of age in Indonesia suffer from wasting. Malnutrition costs Indonesia more than 5 billion USD annually due to lost productivity as the result of poor education standard and diminishing physical capability.

## China

While malnutrition remains a problem in China, particularly in rural areas, the country has made large progress in recent decades. An estimated 12.7 million children are stunted. In 2010, 20 percent of children under 5 living in poor regions were stunted, compared to 5 percent in urban areas. However, the overall situation is improving. China reduced the level of undernourishment in the country from 23.9 percent in 1990-92 to 9.3 percent in 2014-16. Rates of child malnutrition are dropping. From 1990 to 2010, the number of underweight children under 5 fell by 74 percent and rates of stunting dropped by 70 percent. China alone accounts for almost two thirds of the total reduction in the number of undernourished people in developing regions since 1990. Mortality in children under five years due to malnutrition dropped from 22 to 13 percent between 2000 and 2010. A reduction in poverty in rural areas and a stable growth of income are helping to improve child nutrition in poorer regions. In March 2016, the Chinese government and the World Food Programme (WFP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (written agreement) to pave the way for other MEDCs to draw on China's own experience on reducing poverty and hunger.

## Timeline of Events

| Date                    | Event  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>16 October 1945</b>  | Foundation of a permanent organization for food and agriculture, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)   |
| <b>10 December 1948</b> | The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR).   |
| <b>1961</b>             | Establishment of the World Food Programme (WFP), the food assistance branch of the United Nations and the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and food security. |
| <b>16 December 1966</b> | The United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) treaty.  |

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|----------------------------|---|
| <b>1974</b>                | The first food summit, the “World Food Conference”, took place in Rome.   |
| <b>13-17 November 1996</b> | The World Food Summit took place in Rome, Italy   |
| <b>1998</b>                | The Organization STOP HUNGER NOW was formed and began its meal packaging program in 2005.   |
| <b>2000</b>                | The United Nations adopted the Millennium Declaration, establishing the eight international development goals- Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with the first one being to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.   |
| <b>June 2002</b>           | In 2002, at the World Food Summit in Rome, Member Nations adopted the Declaration of the World Food Summit: five years later, requesting for the establishment of an intergovernmental working group to prepare a set of guidelines on the implementation of the right to food. |
| <b>16-18 November 2009</b> | The World Summit on Food Security took place in Rome after the decision and proposal of the FAO Council.  |
| <b>2016</b>                | The Sustainable Development Goals, officially known as Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development replaced the MDGs in 2016.   |

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Fighting malnutrition and world hunger is critical for human wellbeing and development. Thus, the United Nations have set seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which include 169 targets, aiming to completely eradicate all forms of malnutrition and hunger, as well as to ensure food security on an international level by 2030. Although there are thousands of theories on how we can put an end to world

hunger and malnutrition, there has been a lot of heated debate going on over the past few years concerning which one of them is the best solution to this worldwide problem; however, one thing is absolutely certain, and that is that the international community must take action.

We can start by funding projects so that people will be able to provide enough food for them in a sustainable way. This can happen through the development of agriculture in rural areas and in LEDCs, where food supply is not adequate and it will contribute to enabling people to create their own, steady supply of food.

Although it would be ideal to ensure self-sustainability all over the globe, there is a need for more realistic and immediate actions. While trying to achieve our main, long-term goal, we should think of a temporary solution; we can donate both cash and food to those in need, either directly or indirectly with the help of NGOs such as the WFP.

Moreover, countries should focus on ensuring access to education for all. Education is not only linked to opportunity, but also it is directly associated to access to food; in some countries there are food-for-education programs, which means that students are given free food at school.

Empowering women may at first seem irrelevant; however it would have a great impact on the eradication of hunger and the provision and access to food, resulting to a more sustainable development of the economy.

Lastly, all member states of the United Nations should implement resolutions such as:

- A/RES/63/235 on Agriculture development, food security and nutrition;
- A/RES/63/230 on the Eradication of Poverty;
- A/RES/63/217 on Natural disasters and Vulnerability;
- A/RES/63/187 on The right to food;
- A/RES/63/178 on The right to development;
- A/RES/63/175 on Human rights and extreme poverty;
- A/RES/63/142 on the Legal empowerment of the poor and the eradication of poverty;

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## Multimedia resources

Figure 1: <https://www.facebook.com/nirupam.kritika>. "Top 10 Most Malnourished Countries in the World." Lists10. N.p., 02 Aug. 2014. Web. 15 Jan. 2017. <<http://lists10.com/top-10-malnourished-countries-world/>>.

Figure 2: "Malnutrition: A Cycle of Poverty & Economic Stagnation." American Soybean Association. N.p., 02 Apr. 2015. Web. 15 Jan. 2017. <<https://soygrowers.com/a-cycle-of-poverty-economic-stagnation-perpetuated-by-malnutrition/>>.

Figure 3: "Poverty & Hope: Through a Child's Eyes." Pinterest. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2017. <<https://gr.pinterest.com/felicitysonnenb/poverty-hope-through-a-childs-eyes/>>.

Figure 4: "Map World Hunger." Impetk. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2017. <<http://impe.tk/map-world-hunger-2/>>.

Figure 5: Templeton, McKenzie. "Malnutrition and Hunger in Afghanistan." BORGEN. N.p., 22 Apr. 2016. Web. 15 Jan. 2017. <<http://www.borgenmagazine.com/malnutrition-and-hunger-in-afghanistan/>>.

Figure 6: "10 More Symptoms of Malnutrition and When to See a Doctor." New Health Advisor. N.p., 26 Oct. 2015. Web. 15 Jan. 2017. <<http://www.newhealthadvisor.com/Symptoms-of-Malnutrition.html>>.