



**NTU MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2012
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STUDY GUIDE**

YOUR CHAIRPERSONS AT A GLANCE

Dear delegates, welcome to the UNGA at NTUMUN 2012!

My name is Ong Suan Ee, and it is a pleasure and privilege to be the chair of this council. I am a senior research analyst in multilateralism and regionalism studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University.

When I am not working, I spend my time playing the guitar, dappling in the ukulele, being fascinated about North Korea, accumulating books, singing along to musicals, and watching endless reruns of *How I Met Your Mother*, *Scrubs* and *Friends*. I also have a severe case of wanderlust and have lived in Malaysia, several cities across Australia, France, and now Singapore. It is also a pipe dream of mine to one day work on maternal and child health issues in a French-speaking African country.

I was incontrovertibly bitten by the MUN bug during my stint as undersecretary-general of the inaugural Paris International Model United Nations (PIMUN). I went on to represent Iran in the Disarmament and Security Committee (DISEC) and do double duty as a journalist for the UN Press Corps (UNPC) at the first Model United Nations of the University of Salamanca (MUNUSAL). Following that, I chaired the Economic and Financial Council (ECOFIN) at NTUMUN 2011 and the World Health Organization (WHO) at MUNUSAL 2011.

The defining facet of MUN that unflinchingly reels me in at each and every conference is the inspiration and optimism I derive from working with young people who are interested, curious and engaged in some of the world's most pertinent concerns – not only with a good mind to understanding them, but also to innovating solutions to them. I anticipate strong debate, clear views and creative responses to challenges from you all. Above all else, remember to *be inquisitive, critical, courageous and diplomatic* – always respect your colleagues, and employ your sense of humour at all times! ☺

I look forward to getting to know you all over the course of the conference. All the best with the preparations in the lead-up (prepare well and you will enjoy the debates all the more for it!), and see you soon. If you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch with me at ong.suanee@gmail.com at any time.

Suan

Chairperson: Suan



Vice Chairperson: Michael



Hi everyone ☺

My name is Michael Utama, and I will be your Vice Chairperson for the General Assembly for this conference. I am currently a JC2 arts student in Catholic Junior College, and a non-graduating student in Singapore Management University studying the H3 Economics (Game Theory) course. My keen interests and hobbies are extremely diversified, ranging from traveling to acting in theatre plays to partying the night away with my close buddies! I suppose by looking at my surname now you would have guessed by now that I'm not a local Singaporean ☺

Model United Nations has been part of my life since 2008. Having being exposed to this intriguing concept way back in 2008, my MUN journey has been an exhilarating and fruitful one since. My MUN experience ranges from local conferences like Singapore MUN at NUS, to overseas conferences like THIMUN. I have played different roles in various MUN conferences - as a delegate, as a chair, and recently as one of the organizers of my school's inaugural MUN conference last December, where we collaborated with the United Nations Association of Singapore.

What always motivates me to strive in every conference is the presence of driven, highly-focused delegates who are ready to voice their professional opinions on some of the most critical issues plaguing the world today. In the same vein, I hope every one of you here will put in your best

efforts towards resolving the issue of the worrying global food crisis. Remember, it does not matter what school you hail from, what race you are, what country you represent, or where you live - every single one of you plays a crucial role in making a difference.

While you may be thronged by a lot of paperwork and resolutions in the next two days, make full use of this time to build upon new friendships, foster camaraderie, and make wonderful memories that you will never, EVER, forget! With that, I wish you a successful NTU MUN conference ahead, and look forward to a series of exciting debates from the General Assembly!

Michael

Hello Delegates!

My name is Aditya Mitra, and I will be the Vice Chairperson for your committee. I am currently a first year undergraduate student at NTU and am pursuing a Major in Electrical and Electronic Engineering. My interests are quite varied and I consider myself to be quite diverse in the range of activities I pursue. I spend a considerable amount of time reading articles, watching movies, playing and watching football (been an Arsenal fan since I was 6) and PC gaming. I am also a keen debater and am a current member of my university's debate squad.

As far as my MUN experience is concerned, I have been involved with the Model United Nations since 2008. This will be my 8th Model UN conference, and my second time as Vice Chair. I have been involved in organizing and participating in DPSMUN, which was the largest MUN in India with around 950 delegates in ten different councils. I have also represented my high school in various Model UN conferences around India with reasonable success. Although my previous experience has been mainly in the Security Council, Join Crisis Cabinet and Crisis Committees, I am certain that a General Assembly would be a gratifying experience given the diverse range of views and opinions present in council (we're the largest council at NTUMUN).

I hope that the General Assembly at NTUMUN would be an enriching and exciting experience for you. I am looking forward to two days of intense debate and resolution making, but rest assured that it won't be all work. I am sure that these two days would be fun filled and enjoyable where you will interact and mingle with delegates from various countries, build friendships and have a great time. Each of the conferences I have myself attended have given me irreplaceable memories and introduced me to people I am still great friends with. I am certain that NTUMUN would be such an experience for you, and maybe even more! Looking forward to seeing you all (suited up, of course) during the conference.

Cheers!

Aditya

**Vice
Chairperson:
Aditya**





Food security has become one of this century's key global challenges with serious local repercussions. Rising world food prices in 2007–2008 triggered riots particularly in the teeming, impoverished cities of the developing world, where many people spend up to 75 per cent of their incomes on food. The rise in food prices prompted food-exporting nations to impose bans on exports in order to prevent price increases and public unrest at home. This further exacerbated food insecurity in importing nations. As a result of the food price rise coupled with the global financial crisis of 2008–2009, the number of malnourished people reached a historic high of 1.2 billion in 2009. This number has since declined to 925 million in 2010 as a result of a more favourable economic environment and the fall in both international and domestic food prices since 2008. The future challenges to food security are daunting; the world will need to increase food production by 70 per cent by 2050 in order to feed its estimated nine billion people. This must be done in the face of changing consumption patterns, changes in the environment, and the growing scarcity of water and land. Ensuring food security therefore requires a new, concerted and immediate effort with a clear sense of long-term challenges and possibilities.

KEY TERMS

Food security

According to the World Food Summit 1996, food security exists when “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life”. Food security is built on the following three pillars:

- Food availability: sufficient quantities of food available on a consistent basis.
- Food access: having sufficient resources to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet.
- Food use: appropriate use based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate water and sanitation.

Food politics

The political aspects of the production, control, regulation, inspection and distribution of food. The politics can be affected by the ethical, cultural, medical and environmental disputes concerning proper farming, agricultural and retailing methods and regulations.

Food justice

A collective approach to food security that views food security as an inherent right of all peoples. It argues that the world produces enough food to feed all its inhabitants, and that the real problem lies in access, distribution, purchasing power parity and a lack of political will to mobilise efforts.

Food sovereignty

An anti-big business approach to food security. Contends that multinational corporations who dominate the food production, manufacturing and distribution industries have the financial resources available to purchase the agricultural resources of impoverished or developing nations. Also argues that they have the political clout to convert these resources to the exclusive production of cash crops for sale to industrialized nations, and in the process deprive those most at risk of food insecurity of the potential productive capacities of their lands, rendering large-scale farming monopolised by business. Argues that communities should be able to define their own means of production and that food is a basic human right. Food sovereignty advocates banning the production of most cash crops in developing nations, thereby leaving the local farmers to concentrate on subsistence agriculture. Opposes the flow of low-cost subsidised food from industrialised nations into developing countries (“import dumping”), both from a commercial and food aid viewpoint.

Food aid

The provision of food and related assistance to tackle hunger, either in emergency situations, or to help with deeper, longer term hunger alleviation and achieve food security. Major players include the World Food Programme (WFP), individual aid provider/donor countries including the United States and Canada, and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) including World Vision, CARE and CARITAS International.

The Green Revolution

A series of research, development, and technology transfer initiatives, occurring between the 1940s and the late 1970s, that increased agriculture production around the world, beginning most markedly in the late 1960s. Between 1950 and 1984, world grain production increased by over 250 per cent. The production increases fostered by the Revolution are often credited with having helped to avoid widespread global famine and feeding billions of people. Conversely, some believe that the Revolution has decreased food security for many. For example, the shift of subsistence-oriented cropland to cropland oriented towards production of grain for export/animal feed has adversely impacted food supply for local consumption.

The “right to food”

“Right to adequate food is a human right, inherent in all people, to have regular, permanent and unrestricted access, either directly or by means of financial purchases, to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food corresponding to the cultural traditions of people to which the consumer belongs, and which ensures a physical and mental, individual and collective fulfilling and dignified life free of fear.”

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 2002

The agriculture-hunger-poverty nexus

A perspective which contends that agriculture, hunger and poverty are all products of one another and continue to mutually reinforce one another’s severity in a perpetual cycle. Argues strongly for the multi-sectoral and cross-field engagement and collaboration in order to resolve these interrelated issues. Please see the [Millennium Development Goals](#) for a broader idea of this concept.

Food v. fuel debate

The dilemma regarding the risk of diverting farmland or crops for biofuels production in detriment of the food supply on a global scale. Many commodities such as maize, sugar cane or vegetable oil can be used either as food or to make biofuels. The debate on which priority should take precedence continues to rage in a world where dependence on adequate food supply and the desire to reduce global dependency on fossil fuels coexist.

Sustainable development

Defined as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (from *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*, Brundtland Commission, United Nations, 1987). Its two key concepts are:

- the concept of 'needs', in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.

The United Nations 2005 World Summit Outcome Document refers to the "interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars" of sustainable development as economic development, social development, and environmental protection. For more information, please read [The Earth Charter](#).

Land grabbing

The buying or leasing of large pieces of land in developing countries, by domestic and transnational companies, governments, and individuals. Used primarily in reference to acquisitions following the 2007-2008 world food price crisis. The crisis caused dramatic spikes in large-scale agricultural investments, primarily foreign, in developing countries for the purpose of food and biofuel production. Food-driven investments amount to 37per cent of land investments worldwide, primarily undertaken by either agribusinesses seeking to expand their holdings and react to market incentives, and government-backed efforts (especially from Gulf states), stemming from fears surrounding national food security.

EXPOSITION: GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY: THE CRUCIAL LINK

Agriculture remains the largest employment sector in most developing countries and international agriculture agreements are crucial to a country's food security. Some critics argue that trade liberalization may reduce a country's food security by reducing agricultural employment levels. Concern about this has led a group of World Trade Organization (WTO) member states to recommend that current negotiations on agricultural agreements allow developing countries to re-evaluate and raise tariffs on key products to protect national food security and employment.

There are strong, direct relationships between agricultural productivity and food security. 75 per cent of the world's poor live in rural areas and make their living from agriculture. Hunger and malnutrition are greater in these areas than in urban areas. Moreover, the higher the proportion of the rural population that obtains its income solely from subsistence farming (without the benefit of pro-poor technologies and access to markets), the higher the incidence of malnutrition. Therefore, improvements in agricultural productivity aimed at small-scale farmers will benefit the rural poor first.

Agriculture accounts for much of the trading activity of developing countries, particularly those that are most food-insecure. For the developing countries as a whole, agricultural products represent around 8 percent of both exports and total merchandise trade. But for the countries where hunger is most prevalent, the share rises to over 20 percent.

Furthermore, while dependence on agricultural trade has been declining throughout the developing world, it has remained high and relatively stable in the most food-insecure countries. In 1996–2000 the share of agriculture in total exports in countries where more than 34 percent of the population are undernourished amounted to 22 percent, only slightly below the 24–25 percent recorded in 1981–1985.

The fact that agricultural trade represents such a large share of the trading activity of countries where hunger is widespread does not imply that agricultural trade contributes to food insecurity. These countries trade heavily in agricultural products because agriculture is the mainstay of their economies and they need to import food. But it is in the countries with the least hunger that agricultural trade looms largest in relation to the scale of their agricultural economies.

This reflects the fact that agriculture in these countries is more productive, more competitive and better integrated into world markets. And it suggests that more robust agricultural growth can contribute both to reduced hunger and to increased integration in international trade.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND ITS EFFECTS

International Trade can have a major impact on reducing hunger and poverty in developing countries. Participation in trade allows access to larger markets and opens up opportunities for specialization in production and economies of scale. This can be of special importance for developing countries, particularly for smaller ones where the limited size of domestic markets discourages full use of production potential.

At the same time, trade provides access to better and cheaper supplies (including food imports) and may stimulate flows of technology and investment. To the extent that international trade spurs broad-based economic growth, expanded participation in world markets can contribute to improvements in household food security.

But increased openness to international trade has its costs. It may gradually redistribute world production according to countries' comparative advantage. Inevitably this means that in some countries certain industries may shrink, either absolutely or relative to others, as cheaper imports become available. The resulting changes in the production structure and reallocation of resources may have a negative impact on food security, at least in the short term. Unemployment may rise, some productive sectors in agriculture may decline, and the food system may become increasingly concentrated, shutting out small-scale farmers and firms.

Main analysts argue that the main reasons for a long-term bubble in grain prices lie largely in a number of dubious human actions, related to heightened competition for grain as either fuel or feed. One stated reason is an ill-conceived dash by both the United States and Europe to use grain and valuable farmland for biofuels, motivated more by powerful farm lobbies than concern about global warming. Then there is the rising demand for grain-fed meat by an expanding middle class in China, India, and other fast-growing economies. Last year saw mass protests in Mexico over the skyrocketing prices of tortillas, rice riots in Senegal, and street demonstrations in Italy over higher prices for pasta. Many governments have slapped price controls.



The soaring prices stemmed from the cumulative effects of long-term trends, like the increasing demand of food due to the growing world population and a decline in agricultural investment, more immediate supply and demand dynamics, including those related to the rapidly increasing oil prices and diversions of maize to ethanol production, and responses like hoarding which exacerbated price volatility.

Altogether, the crisis exposed underlying structural problems in the food systems of poorer countries, partly linked to serious distortions in world food markets (associated with production subsidies in rich countries and trade tariffs), that predispose to price spikes and problems with food availability. Climate-related events like droughts, floods and environmental degradation have further negative effects on many developing countries.

WATER AND FOOD SECURITY

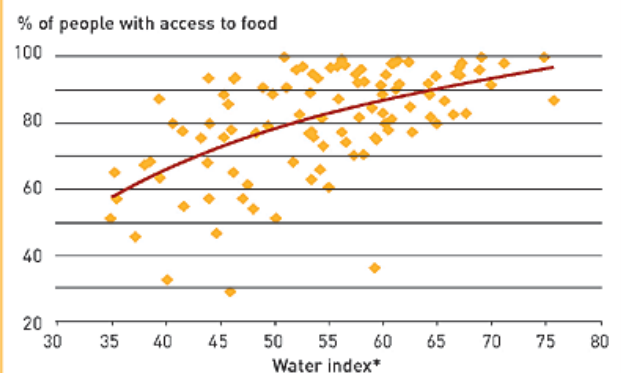
Water and food security are closely related. Agriculture is by far the biggest user of water, accounting for about 69 percent of all withdrawals worldwide and over 80 percent in developing countries. Reliable access to adequate water increases agricultural yields, providing more food and higher incomes in the rural areas that are home to three-quarters of the world's hungry people. Not surprisingly, countries with better access to water also tend to have lower levels of undernourishment.

If water is a key ingredient in food security, lack of it can be a major cause of famine and undernourishment, particularly in food-insecure rural areas where people depend on local agriculture for both food and income. Drought ranks as the single most common cause of severe food shortages in developing countries. For the three most recent years for which data is available, drought was listed as a cause in 60 percent of food emergencies.

Africa is both the driest continent (other than Oceania) and the region where hunger is most prevalent. Within Africa, undernourishment and periodic famines have afflicted semi-arid and drought-prone areas.

Even where overall water availability is adequate, erratic rainfall and access to water can cause both short-term food shortages and long-term food insecurity. Floods are another major cause of food emergencies. Sharp seasonal differences in water availability can also increase food insecurity. In India, for example, more than 70 percent of annual rainfall occurs during the three months of the monsoon, when most of it floods out to sea. Farmers who lack irrigation facilities must contend with water scarcity through much of the year and with the threat of crop failures when the monsoons fail.

Access to water and food security
(developing countries and countries in transition)



* A composite indicator that incorporates measures of water resources (from rainfall, river flows and aquifer recharge), access, environmental issues (water quality) and pressure on resources.

Source: FAO, CEH Wallingford

World Food Programme (WFP)



Established in 1961, the WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting global hunger. In emergencies such as war, civil conflict and natural disasters, the WFP delivers emergency food aid to those most in need. The WFP also continues to use food as a means to help communities rebuild, reconstruct and repair in post-emergency situations. The WFP is a voluntarily-funded arm of the UN.

Its five objectives are:

- Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies
- Prepare for emergencies
- Restore and rebuild lives after emergencies
- Reduce chronic hunger and undernutrition everywhere
- Strengthen the capacity of countries to reduce hunger

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)



The FAO, established in 1945 as the UN's permanent body for food and agriculture, cites its commitment towards ensuring people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives. The FAO's mandate is to raise levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, better the lives of rural populations and contribute to the growth of the world economy.

Its activities encompass four main areas:

- knowledge networking and information sharing
- policy expertise sharing, advice and collaboration
- providing a neutral forum for member states to convene, debate and discuss pertinent issues, and
- bringing knowledge and technical expertise to the field and to the ground by way of numerous practical projects

The United States



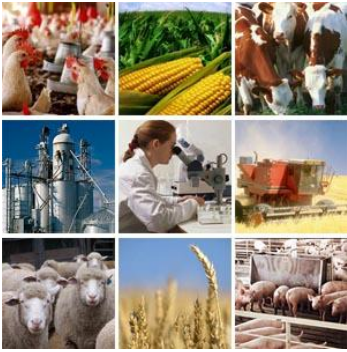
The US is one of the world's foremost agricultural superpowers. A net exporter of food, the US boasts 2.2 million farms, with the following agricultural products among its top twenty: corn, cattle meat, cow's milk, chicken meat, soybean, pig meat, wheat, hen eggs, turkey meat, tomatoes, potatoes, sugar beets (used to make refined sugar) and rice. Additionally, the US is home to some of the world's Goliaths of the food and agriculture industry, including PepsiCo, Dole, General Mills, Cargill, DuPont, Archer Daniels Midland, and Monsanto. (*Chair's Note: Google them up if you don't know who they are, you'll recognise their products immediately!*)

The European Union (EU)



The EU is a major food producing region for cereals (285 million tonnes in 2010), vegetables (58 million tonnes in 2010) and fresh fruit (36 million tonnes in 2010). It also produces a significant volume of poultry and milk/milk products. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) governs agricultural subsidies and programmes across the EU, representing almost 50per cent of the EU budget. The CAP combines a direct subsidy payment for crops and land which may be cultivated with price support mechanisms, in order to encourage agricultural activity in the region, protect its farmers, stabilise markets, secure supply, and provide consumers with high-quality produce at reasonable prices. Critics of this protectionist system have argued that too few Europeans benefit from the CAP as only 5.5per cent of all Europeans work on farms, and the farming sector is responsible for only 1.6per cent of the EU's GDP (2005).

Agribusiness interests



Agribusiness refers to the many businesses involved in food production, including farming/contract farming, seed supply, agrichemicals, farm machinery, wholesale, distribution, processing, marketing and retail sales. They range from large to small, but for the purposes of this guide, we will focus on monolithic ones like Nestle, Unilever, Kraft, the Coca-Cola Company, and Danone. A 2010 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food identified agribusinesses as major contributors to global food insecurity. The report argues that large agribusinesses can exert monopoly control over key markets and raise prices for lack of competition, hurting all food consumers. Conversely, if they have excessive market power over suppliers – particularly farmers – they can exert monopsony (one buyer, many sellers) control and force down crop prices. In theory, this benefits food consumers - but this is only true if this effect trickles down in a direct manner. Also, price squeezes put smallholder farmers in a precarious position, contributing to the global food crisis because the majority of the world's hungry are small-scale subsistence farmers with limited access to food aside from local production.

Food Insecure Nations and Regions

Main examples include the following:

- *The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)*
 - Acute food shortages were reported in the DPRK in 2002, 2007, 2008, and 2010. This year, more of such reports have made headlines, including alarming claims of the country importing animal feed from China to feed its population, and that some North Koreans have been reduced to searching for wild grass to eat. The current food shortage in North Korea is attributable to a number of factors. External contributors include the 2007-2008 and 2011 spikes in global food prices and the suspension of aid support, including that of food, from major donors. The US halted food aid in 2009 over concerns of Pyongyang's nuclear and missile tests and transparency of food distribution. Additionally, US authorities reported that North Korea had refused US food aid just prior to the suspension. South Korea also froze almost all aid to its northern counterpart following the 2010 Cheonan sinking incident and the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island.
 - The ongoing food crisis in North Korea is exacerbated by internal factors. Reports of inequitable distribution of available food aid remain. Foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks have killed thousands of draught oxen, cows and pigs - animals essential to agricultural production and consumption. The country recently endured its coldest winter since 1945, with frigid temperatures increasing the demand for fuel while adversely affecting industrial activity and agricultural outputs. As a result, North Korean industries have slowed down, rice prices are rapidly vacillating, and the WFP and FAO have warned that up to 5 million North Koreans are at risk of famine.
 - The political undercurrent influencing food aid to North Korea continues to drive international responses to this crisis. Despite the DPRK's apparent readiness to negotiate, the US remains reluctant to reinstate food aid unless better oversight and monitoring in distribution is guaranteed, especially in light of internal distribution issues such as diversions of aid to the military. Meanwhile, other Western countries have insisted that any food aid would need to be part of a concerted multilateral effort. The death of patriarch Kim Jong-Il and uncertainties regarding the leadership and policies of heir apparent Kim Jong-Un only compounds this already indeterminate situation.
- *The Horn of Africa*
 - The region encompasses Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Kenya. It is one of the most food insecure regions in the world, characterised by frequent droughts and conflict. Population growth in the region over the last several decades has resulted on undue pressure on limited land resources, leading to gross mismanagement of land, water and agricultural resources in an already arid climate. The region experienced severe droughts in 1983–85, 1991–92 1998–99 and recently in 2011.
 - The 2011 drought, coupled with conflict in Somalia, has affected over 13 million people. Many refugees from southern Somalia have fled to neighboring Kenya and Ethiopia, where crowded, unsanitary conditions together with severe malnutrition have led to a large number of deaths. Other countries in and around the Horn of Africa, including Djibouti, Sudan, South Sudan and parts of Uganda, are also affected by a food crisis. Related crises have emerged as a direct consequence of the famine, including a refugee crisis (the inflow of hundreds of thousands of Somali refugees into Kenya and Ethiopia) and infectious disease outbreaks due to overcrowding, malnutrition and unsanitary conditions (cholera, measles, malaria).

TIMELINE & RELEVANT EVENTS

Date	Event
October 1945	Establishment of FAO
1961	Establishment of the World Food Programme
November 1974	World Food Conference Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition
1977	Establishment of the International Fund for Agriculture Development
1983	The UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities appoints a Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food
1985	Food Aid Convention
1987	Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food submits final report to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities
December 1992	International Conference on Nutrition (FAO/WHO)
13-17 November 1996	World Food Summit General Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action
November 1997	FAO Conference Resolution
1-2 December 1997	First Consultation on the Right to Adequate Food background documents Final Report
30 March – 2 April 1998	ACC/SCN meeting – recommendations of the Working Group on Nutrition, Ethics and Human Rights
18 – 19 November 1998	Second Consultations on the human right to food
April 1999	ACC SCN: Symposium on the Substance and Politics of a Human Rights Approach to Food and Nutrition Policies and Programmes
May 1999	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights discuss the Right to Food in Article 11 of the Covenant
1 July 1999	Food Aid Convention
August 1999	Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. Updated study on the right to food, submitted by Asbjørn Eide (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1999/12), 28 June 1999
July 2000	Appointment of Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food
June 2002	World Food Summit: five years later Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food
November 2002	FAO Council establishes Intergovernmental Working Group to elaborate Voluntary Guidelines on the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food
26 – 28 March 2003	First session of the “Intergovernmental Working Group – Right To Food Guidelines” (IGWG–RTFG)

27 – 29 October 2003

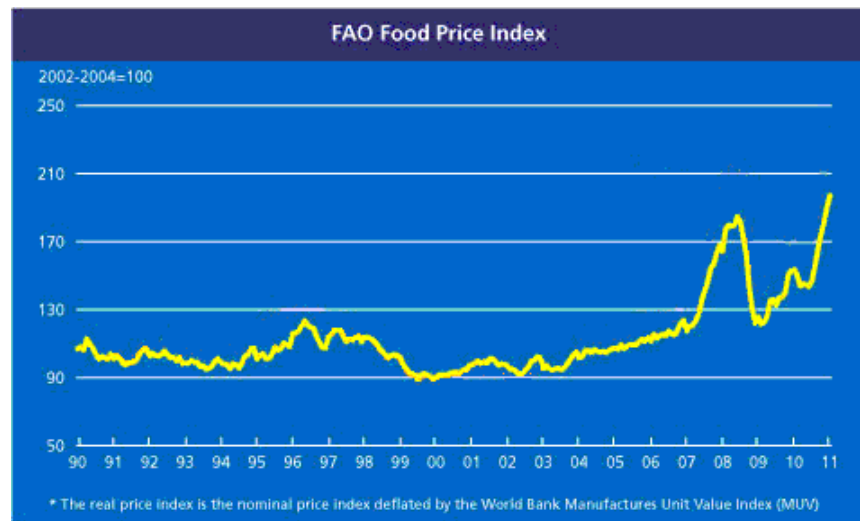
Second session of the IGWG–RTFG

Late 2006

Staple crop price spikes around the world due to severe droughts in food-producing regions, grain-producing nations and rising oil prices

2007 – 2008

World food price crisis: observe major spike in 2007-2008 and again in 2011



Global Food Price Index 1990-2011 – Source: <http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/en/>

2010

Seoul G20 Multi-Year Action Plan on Development – Food Security Pillar

2011

G20 Action Plan on Food Price Volatility and Agriculture

Below are three broad issues that delegates can explore and consider thoroughly when drafting resolutions to achieve a healthier state of global food security.

7.1 | Lack of Supply

While it is conspicuous to say that the shortage in food supply threatens global food security, the causes that led to this shortage are something that delegates should dutifully consider. For some authentic cases, a country may have problems producing food, and hence aren't able to satisfy the demands of their people, such as in Kenya's droughts in the last decade or Thailand's flooding incidents. However, according to the United Nations, the overall availability of food is not a problem; rather the problem often lies in the poor distribution of food and a lack of purchasing power. In addition, the absence of food security tends to stem out more from the restrictions imposed by authorities on the barely-sufficient supplies from reaching the consumers who require them. This is especially seen in countries that implement price controls, such as the burning of crops in order to raise its prices and making it more profitable. Either way, efforts should be taken to keep the government in a favorable position to supply their citizens in times of food shortage. As such, delegates are highly encouraged to not only discuss strategies to alleviate food shortage per se, but rather tackle the root causes behind it.



Figure 7A: Starving children in Kenya

7.2 | Lack of Food Sovereignty

Food sovereignty views the business practices of multinational corporations (MNCs) as a form of neo-colonialism. It contends that MNCs have the financial resources available to purchase the agricultural resources of impoverished nations. They also wield the political authority to convert these resources to exclusive productions of cash crops for sale to Developed Countries (DCs) outside of region, and in the process to exploit the poor of their productive lands¹. Under this notion, subsistence farmers are left to cultivate only lands that are so marginal in terms of productivity that the amount of food being cultivated for consumption could hardly feed everyone within the vicinity. Likewise, food sovereignty empowers the communities to define their own means of production and that food is a basic human right. Many communities calling for food sovereignty are protesting the acquisition of Western technologies on to their indigenous systems and agency.



Figure 7B: Supporters of "Food Sovereignty"

The concept of "food sovereignty" advocates banning the production of most cash crops in developing nations; thereby leaving the local farmers to concentrate on subsistence agriculture. In addition, this concept opposes allowing low-cost subsidized food from DCs into developing countries, what is referred to as "import dumping". As such, delegates could perhaps consider this concept of "food sovereignty" when drafting a resolution, bearing in mind the negative repercussions that might entail from this idea.

7.3 | Agricultural Economy & Population Growth²³

In its "The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2003", FAO states that: 'In general the countries that succeeded in reducing hunger were characterized by more rapid economic growth and specifically more rapid growth in their agricultural sectors. They also exhibited slower population growth, lower levels of HIV and higher ranking in the Human Development Index'. As such, according to the FAO, addressing agriculture and population growth is vital to achieving food security. Other organizations have also advocated improvements in agriculture and population control, in a bid to manage global food security.

¹ The Guardian, *Big Business Clear Winner in Peru's Asparagus Industry*, accessed on 15 January 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2010/sep/15/peru-asparagus-aid-policy>

² Pablo Stafforini. "Peter Singer advocating population control", accessed on 15 January 2012, <http://www.utilitarian.net/singer/by/1972----.htm>

³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*, accessed on 15 January 2012, http://www.fao.org/documents/show_cdr.asp?url_file=/docrep/006/j0083e/j0083e00.htm

8.1 | UN Documents

- The Comprehensive Framework for Action

8.2 | High Level Task Force (HTLF) Progress Reports

- HTLF Progress Report April 2008 – October 2009 (November 2009)
- The UN System Response to World Food Security Crisis (September 2008)

8.3 | Fact Sheets

- Madrid Meeting 26 – 27 January to Chart Action on Continuing Global Food Crisis
- Global Economic Turmoil Intensifies the Food Crisis. Immediate Action is Required to Secure Adequate Long-Term Global Food Supply
- Comprehensive Framework for Action Summary

8.4 | Other Key Documents from Organizations of the HTLF

- Implications of Higher Global Food Prices for Poverty Low-Income Countries (World Bank, 2008)
- Increasing Food Prices and Food Security: Diagnostic Issues and Policy Options (UNDP, November 2008)
- A Preliminary Anatomy of the Unfolding Global Food Crisis (UNDP, 2008 by P. Conceição and R. Mendoza)
- The Future of World Food Security (IFAD Factsheet, 2009)
- Analysis of the World Food Crisis by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Mr. de Schutter (OHCHR, 2008)
- Rising Agricultural Prices: Consequences and Responses (OECD, Policy Brief 2008)
- Responding to the Food Crisis: Synthesis of Medium-Term Measures Proposed in Inter-Agency Assessments (FAO, WFP, 2009)
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