

LIMUN

LICEO'S MODEL UNITED NATIONS

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund



Topic A: *“Preventing malnutrition in children and dealing with its negative consequences, such as greater death risk and the increasing frequency and severity of infections”*

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I. COMMITTEE BACKGROUND

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was created in 1946 with the objective of providing food and healthcare to children that had been victims of World War II. Later in 1953, it became a permanent committee.

Throughout the years, UNICEF has provided family planning support, educational programmes and aid to struggling mothers and children. It has also created various campaigns, for example, to prevent AIDS and HIV.

Currently, UNICEF is present in 190 countries and it has reached 45% of the world's children with vaccines, provided almost 47 million children with education materials and given safe water to more than 49 million

people in the last 3 years. All this with the purpose of fulfilling its mission, which is, and has always been, defending children's lives and rights.

II. HISTORY OF THE TOPIC

A. Introduction to the topic

Around 5.6 million children under the age of 5 died in 2016 (approximately 15 000 deaths per day) due to conditions that could have been prevented. Malnutrition is one of the factors that alter the children's well-being by leveling up the risk of dying from common diseases. Malnutrition refers to deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances in a person's intake of energy and/or nutrients. Roughly 3 million losses of young lives a year are attributed to it.

Malnutrition causes more than 300,000 deaths per year in children younger than 5 years in developing countries; there is a strong and consistent relationship between malnutrition and an increased mortality rate from infectious diseases. Data from the Global Burden of Disease Study in 2010 highlights that mortality due to micronutrient deficiencies has remained unchanged in the last 20 years.

B. Evolution of the topic

The interaction between malnutrition and infections has created a potentially lethal cycle that deteriorates nutritional status and increases death risks.

Thirty years ago, protein deficiency was perceived to be the major nutritional problem of children in developing countries. Since the 1990's, the number of malnutrition has increased a 20%. These cases mostly occur in low-and-middle- income countries. Due to the lack of resources, the vast

majority of children are found to have severe undernutrition. Where the resources can be available, they are not accessible to those with lower income. These have created a notable difference in the social classes where children with higher income are often found in obesity.

C. Relevant events

As commonly known, humans are in a constant physical development, especially in their first twenty years. This is why it is imperative for children to receive the right nutrition so that they can grow properly and healthy. However, lately there are more malnourished kids than healthy kids. In 2016, there were 155 million stunted kids, which means they were prevented from growing or developing properly. The devastating effects of stunting can last a lifetime. The continent with the most stunted children was Asia, with 87 million stunted kids; Then followed Africa, with 59 million. ;Latin America and the Caribbean with 6 million ;and finally Oceania, with 0.5 million stunted kids.

Besides those 155 million stunted kids, there were also 52 million wasted kids, which refers to a child who is too thin for his or her height. Wasting, or acute malnutrition, is the result of recent rapid weight loss or the failure to gain weight. A child who is moderately or severely wasted has an increased risk of death, but treatment is possible. In Asia, there were 36 million wasted kids; in Africa, 14 million. Latin America and the Caribbean had 1 million wasted kids; and lastly, Oceania only had 0.1 million. Again, Asia is the continent with most children suffering from malnutrition.

In the past years, stunting has been declining slowly while overweight continues to rise. Asia and Africa are bearing the greatest share of all forms of malnutrition. Two out of five stunted children and more than half

of all wasted children in the world live in Southern Asia. Africa is the only continent in which the number of stunted children has risen.

III. CURRENT ISSUES

A. Panorama

Malnutrition affects one in three people. Every country is facing a serious public health challenge from malnutrition. Many will think that malnutrition is the lack of food or poor child growth, but actually, malnutrition also includes people who are prone to skin and bone infections, overweight people, people who carry too much sugar in their blood or cholesterol, and people who have a vitamin deficiency.

Every year in Africa and Asia, the economic consequences represent losses of 11 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Countries have agreed on targeting nutrition; however, in recent years, it seems that those targets have been forgotten and left off track. UNICEF has been planning on ways to reverse this trend and end all forms of malnutrition by 2030.

Malnutrition and poor diets constitute the number-one driver of the global burden of disease. For example, in the United States, when someone is obese, the household in which they live faces additional annual care which cost is equivalent to 8 percent of its annual income. In China, diabetes diagnosis comes with an annual 16.3% loss of income for those that are sick.

B. Points of view

Haiti

This country is facing the worst malnutrition case in the world. One in three children is stunted in Haiti while a hundred thousand children

suffer from acute malnutrition. It also has the lowest food availability since each person consumes around 1,976 calories per day.

Chad

This country has the highest rate of malnutrition in the entire region of Western Africa. Chad relies on its agricultural harvests, although they routinely fail. The country is near a region named the Sahel, which has been struggling with hunger for years. More than 750,000 people in this country require emergency food assistance. A survey made by SMART in 2014 claims that children malnutrition in Chad rates between 6.8% and 13.3%.

Madagascar

Madagascar is a country that has been struggling a lot with natural disasters and food production. Nearly 2 million children in the country are stunted due to chronic malnutrition. That's over a half of Madagascar's children. 50% of children under five are stunted.

Zambia

This country has been affected by its drastic climate change which has had a severe impact on the agricultural field of the country. Stunting impacts almost half of the Zambian children. Thousands of children and women suffer from one or more forms of malnutrition, like low birth weight, wasting, stunting, underweight, and multiple micronutrient deficiencies such as vitamin A, iron, zinc, and iodine deficiencies.

Sierra Leone

Although this country has many natural resources, it has suffered a lot from civil wars that have made them struggle. The nutrition situation in

the country is poor, with global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate of 5.1%. According to a National Nutrition Survey, there were around 47,861 wasted children and 293,736 stunted children in 2017, indicating a persistent serious chronic malnutrition according to WHO Classification.

IV. UN & EXTERNAL ACTIONS

A. UN actions

In the past years, food prices have risen dramatically and have led the United Nations Chief Executives Board in April 2018 to launch the High-Level task force on the Global Food Security Crisis. Its goal is to promote a universal response of all countries to fight malnutrition and achieve global food and nutrition security.

In 2012, the UN Secretary-General launched the “Zero Hunger Challenge”. It was launched to inspire an international movement towards a world free from hunger within a generation. Its main goals are to have zero stunted children who are under the age of two; complete access to proper food all year long; sustainable food systems, and zero waste or loss of food.

The FAO is the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN. They try to support people in their efforts to make sure that everyone has regular access to enough food. FAO also helps as a knowledge network. Their people collect, analyze, and popularise the information that helps to prevent hunger. It also provides a setting where developed and undeveloped countries come together in a common understanding. FAO states that there is enough food produced worldwide to eliminate hunger, nevertheless, there are still 815 million people suffering from hunger and 155 million of them are stunted children under the age of five. Their idea is

to improve the world's capacities and mobilizing resources at all levels to eradicate hunger and all stunted children.

B. External actions

The United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition was proclaimed on April 1, 2016 with the purpose of addressing all forms of malnutrition. Led by WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition calls for policy action across key areas such as aligning health systems to nutrition needs; creating sustainable, resilient food systems for healthy diets, among others.

The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement has expanded to 40 countries which, since 2010, has helped 80 million children. In 2016, World Food Programme reached 13 million women and children with malnutrition treatments and prevention programmes.

The Global Child Nutrition Foundation is a global network of governments, businesses, and civil society organizations that work together with children and their communities. Also known as GCNF, this foundation provides training, technical assistance, and networking opportunities to help governments build meal programs that are nutritious, locally sourced, and independent from international aid to help the community thrive.

V. CONCLUSION

More than 300,000 deaths per year in developing countries of children under the age of five are caused by malnutrition, and since 1990 the number of malnutrition has increased a 20%. Children with low resources often fit in these numbers; on the other hand, families with a

higher social class are sometimes found with obese kids. There are more types of malnutrition other than the lack of food such as people with overweight or those who carry too much sugar in their blood. Countries have agreed in combating malnutrition, but they actually haven't done much though there are many organizations that help to fight against malnutrition.

The committee's mission is to find a way to help prevent malnutrition in the world and dealing with its negative consequences.

VI. IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. Do your countries' citizens suffer from malnutrition? If so, what are the roots of the situation? Is there anything that can be done in order to improve the situation?
2. Has your country implemented measures or action plans in order to reduce the level of malnutrition? Have they been effective? If so, is it possible for them to be implemented in developing regions?
3. Is there any direct relationship between a country's educational level and child malnutrition?
4. How can a region with poor resources prevent and deal with malnutrition without severely affecting its economy?
5. What measures can be implemented in order to reduce child mortality? Has your country implemented effective action plans?

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