DEVELOPING AGRICULTURAL FRAMEWORKS TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AND HIGH-RISK AREAS (CAHRAS)

FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANISATION (FAO) – BATHMUN 2024

Message from the Chairs

Dear delegates,

Welcome to the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) Committee at BathMUN 2024. During the 3-day conference, we will be exploring suitable agricultural frameworks and technologies for addressing food insecurity in Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas (CAHRAs). Our aim for the weekend is for all delegates of this intermediate (and somewhat untrivial) committee to leave as more learned individuals and have an enjoyable time while at it.

Yours sincerely,
Ted, Hayley and Chloe

Chair Introduction

Ted Yip

Hello! I'm Ted, a first-year student of Human, Social and Political Sciences at Christ's College, Cambridge. I have previously studied at UCL for a year (which is where you probably know me from). My interest in politics spans from conceptualising social movements to analysing global conflicts. Although I didn't have the chance to do MUN in high school, my passion for MUN never faded away - I have participated in multiple university-level conferences and served as the First Year Representative at UCL United Nations Association, USG Events at WestMUN, and Director General at UCLMUN Edition X. I am really excited to chair the FAO committee at BathMUN this year, and I look forward to meeting all of you at the conference! Outside of MUN, you might find me playing on a public piano (which I have been playing for more than 15 years).

(p.s. Hayley endured the freezing cold to take this photo - and many others - that's dedication)

Hayley Kwok

Chair Introduction

Hi! I'm Hayley, a second-year French with Management student at UCL. I am the Vice President for External Affairs of the UCL United Nations Association, and Press Director at UCLMUN Edition X. Whilst my degree doesn't have a direct link to politics, I have enjoyed taking part in MUN extensively for two years now - I was Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services at my sixth form's MUN, and delegated and chaired in over 10 university conferences in the UK and France.

I love baking and have been intrigued by food science for longer than I can remember, so I'm overjoyed to chair the FAO committee, which combines two of my many passions. Others include taking photos of just about everything, spending time outdoors, bouldering, and drinking coffee. I can't wait to see you all at Bath and for our committee sessions to begin!

(p.s. Ted took this picture. He's such a great photographer!)

Chloe Kam

Hey everyone! I am Chloe, a third-year Neuroscience student from Queen Mary, University of London. I'm honoured to be one of the chairs in the one and only pitched committee at BathMUN 2024! I often get asked why I do MUN as a STEM student — because it is fun meeting people outside my field, and conferences serve as escapes from the growing amount of reading I have to do for my course. When I am procrastinating on my degree, you can either find me searching for a good mystery page-turner (searching not reading as I fail to find compelling ones so any recommendations are more than welcome!), hanging out with my friends, attempting to learn French or watching history documentaries.

Introduction to the Committee

The Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) is a specialised UN agency that aims to collate international efforts to combat hunger.

The goals of FAO are to:
- achieve food security worldwide, and
- ensure access to high-quality food for all in order to promote a healthy population.

FAO coordinates its work with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Secretariat (Fig 1), but remains an autonomous organisation. It has 195 members - 194 countries and the European Union (EU), and operates in over 130 countries.
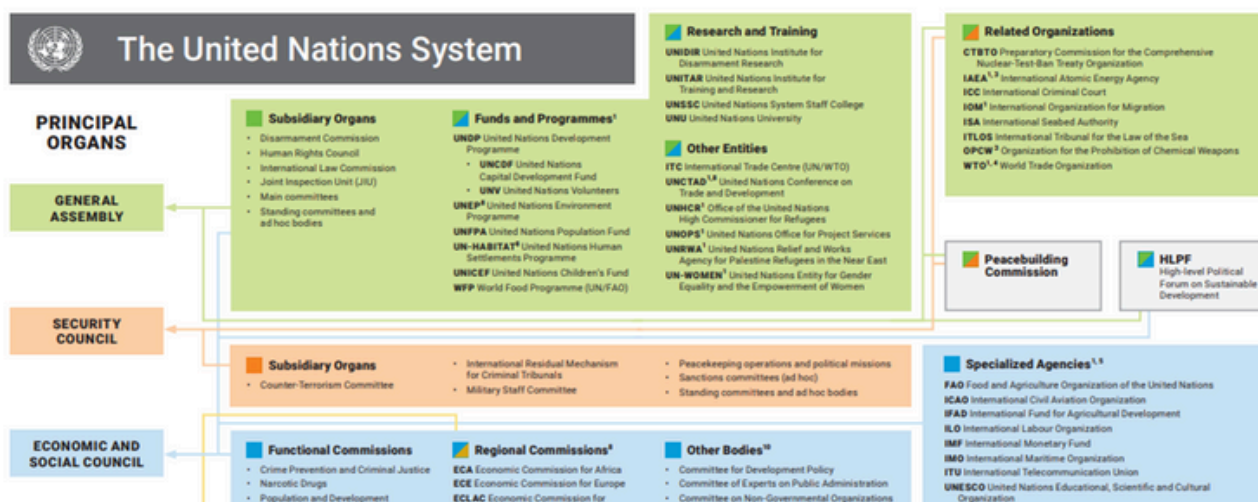

Figure 1. United Nations System Chart (UN, 2023)

Committee Mandate

The FAO is mandated to lead international efforts in defeating hunger, improving nutrition, and promoting food security worldwide. FAO plays a pivotal role in supporting member states through research, policy advice, capacity building, and on-the-ground projects aimed at achieving sustainable agricultural development. Its mandate encompasses a wide array of objectives, including increasing agricultural productivity, improving rural livelihoods, enhancing the resilience of communities against food crises, and ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources. As part of its mission, FAO also collects data and provides valuable information on global agriculture trends, helping policymakers make informed decisions that support food systems and environmental health.

Introduction to the Committee

The FAO has conducted numerous **World Food Surveys**, hosted several **World Food Conferences and Congresses**, and organised various initiatives since its conception, including the **World Seed Campaign** in 1957 and the **Freedom from Hunger Campaign** in 1961. It has also collaborated with other UN agencies such as UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, and WHO. A notable partnership was the implementation of the Codex Alimentarius with WHO in 1963, which establishes international food standards, safeguards consumer health, and promotes fair practices in food trade.

Examples of past actions include:
- **Emergency Assistance Program**, offering immediate support to communities affected by crises, supplying essential resources such as seeds, tools, and technical expertise to help restore agricultural productivity.
- **Farmer Field Schools program** empowers smallholder farmers by providing hands-on training in sustainable farming practices, enhancing their knowledge and skills.
- **Global Information System on Food Security and Nutrition (GISFSN)** collects and disseminates valuable data to inform policymakers and stakeholders, fostering better decision-making.

Through these efforts, the FAO not only addresses immediate food security challenges but also promotes long-term resilience and sustainable development in vulnerable communities.

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Key Definitions

Food security, the right to food, and food sovereignty

Food security, as defined by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) (2014),

> exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The four pillars of food security are availability, access, utilization and stability. The nutritional dimension is integral to the concept of food security and to the work of CFS. (p.2)

While food security is not a legal concept and does not impose obligations on states to uphold it, it is a **precondition for the full entitlement of individuals to the right to food**, a human right recognised under international law – right to food is acknowledged in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and is enshrined in the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 2010). As the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights defines the right to food in General Comment No. 12,

> The right to adequate food is [realised] when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement.

Your paragraph textAs such, the right to food echoes the definition of food security in granting individuals the entitlement to sufficient food and the resources essential for sustainably achieving food security (OHCHR, 2010). Ensuring food security is instrumental to the FAO and its member countries' work, as "the right to food places legal obligations on States to overcome hunger and malnutrition and [realise] food security for all" (OHCHR, 2010), and more specifically, compels states to "pro-actively engage in activities intended to strengthen people's access to and utilisation of resources and means to ensure their livelihood, including food security" (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1999).

The right to food also encompasses the responsibilities of States that extend beyond their borders, including trade obligations (OHCHR, 2010). For instance, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights mandates that states implement the necessary measures for an equitable distribution of global food supplies based on need, obligating them to ensure that their trade or other policies support this goal (OHCHR, 2010).

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On a similar note, the OHCHR (2010) notes food sovereignty as:

> an emerging concept according to which peoples define their own food and own model of food production (such as agriculture and fisheries), determine the extent to which they want to be self-reliant and protect domestic food production and regulate trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives. (p.4)

As the OHCHR (2010) suggests, food sovereignty is a concept that advocates for a different approach to agriculture and trade policies that prioritise people's rights to food, as well as safe, healthy, and environmentally sustainable food production. The Special Rapporteur on the right to food has highlighted the critical role of food sovereignty in relation to the right to food, underscoring its growing importance in ensuring the food sovereignty of individuals and nations (OHCHR, 2010). Therefore, it is crucial to consider the interests of individual persons in states when proposing policies to address food insecurity.

Conflict-Affected and High Risk Areas (CAHRAs)

Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas (CAHRAS) are regions significantly impacted by violence, instability, or other forms of conflict. The current CAHRAs under Regulation (EU) 2017/821 include Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, India, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Ukraine, Venezuela, Yemen, and Zimbabwe (RAND Europe, 2024).

These areas often experience:
1. **Armed Conflict**: Ongoing or recent violence involving state and non-state actors, causing displacement and insecurity.
2. **Humanitarian Needs**: High levels of poverty, lack of access to basic services (such as healthcare and education), and food insecurity.
3. **Political Instability**: Weak or failing governance structures that may struggle to provide security or basic needs for citizens.
4. **Social Fragmentation**: Ethnic, religious, or social divisions exacerbated by conflict, leading to tensions and potential violence.
5. **Economic Disruption**: Damage to infrastructure and local economies, resulting in unemployment and reduced livelihoods.

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The resulting instability can lead to widespread displacement, economic disruption, and social fragmentation, further compounding the challenges of food insecurity.

Tackling food insecurity in conflict-affected and high-risk areas is essential for stabilising these regions and accelerating their post-conflict recovery. Region-specific interventions are necessary not only to meet immediate humanitarian needs, but also to promote long-term peacebuilding and sustainable development. Without addressing the interconnected nature of both conflict and food insecurity, efforts to restore stability and improve the quality of life for affected populations may be insufficient. However, it is important to remember that the mandate of FAO is to address food concerns rather than solve conflict.

Timeline of Events

1945   **Establishment of FAO**

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) was established as a specialised agency of the United Nations during the first session held in Quebec City, Canada. Washington, D.C. is designated as the temporary headquarters, which later moves to Rome, Italy.

1963   **Creation of the World Food Programme**

FAO and the UN General Assembly adopted parallel resolutions to establish the World Food Programme, aimed at providing urgent food aid to affected areas in real-time.

1970   **Global Agricultural Plan**

A comprehensive world plan was developed to analyse major agricultural issues for the 1970s and 1980s. Its primary goal is to address anticipated food shortages over the next two decades, offering a framework for governments to formulate and implement agricultural policies. The plan emphasises guidance rather than directives.

1972   **Sahel Crisis**

The Sahelian region faced a severe drought beginning in 1968, reaching crisis levels in 1972. The FAO's first assessment mission reveals the extent of the disaster, prompting the immediate delivery of 20,000 tonnes of cereals and protective foods. By 1975, over 1.5 million tonnes of grain have been supplied.

1974   **Committee on World Food Security**

In response to the recommendations from the 1974 World Food Conference, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was established. The committee focused on increasing global grain production and stabilising markets, with the belief that these actions will ensure sufficient food for all.

1977   **Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS)**

GIEWS was established to monitor food demand and supply at global and national levels. It produced special monthly reports on crop information and provided early warnings of potential food crises in specific countries.

Timeline of Events

1992   **World Declaration and Plan of Action on Nutrition**

The Declaration and Plan of Action on Nutrition was adopted at the International Conference on Nutrition, where governments committed to eliminating or significantly reducing various malnutrition-related conditions by the next millennium.

1994   **Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS)**

FAO launched the SPFS, endorsed by the World Food Summit in 1996. The program aimed to assist low-income, food-deficit countries improve their national food security.

2004   **Right to Food Guidelines**

The FAO Council adopted the Right to Food Guidelines after two years of intergovernmental negotiations mandated by the "World Food Summit: Five Years Later." The Right to Food Guidelines are a set of voluntary principles adopted to help governments implement the right to food, as recognized by international law. These guidelines provide a practical framework for countries to respect, protect, and fulfil people's right to adequate food, ensuring that everyone has physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food for a healthy life. It recognizes food as not just a commodity but a fundamental human right, guiding governments to prioritise food security and nutrition policies in their national agendas.

2009   **World Summit on Food Security**

This summit emphasised the urgent need to combat hunger. 60 heads of state and government, along with 192 ministers, unanimously adopted a declaration reaffirming their commitment to eradicating hunger as soon as possible.

2010   **Emergency Relief for Pakistan**

Following devastating floods in Pakistan that destroyed seed stocks and livestock, FAO responded by distributing wheat seeds to half a million farming families in time for the planting season. An additional 235,000 families received feed and veterinary medicine for their animals.

Timeline of Events

2016   **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was introduced, succeeding the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This agenda includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Fig 2.) focused on various global objectives, with food and agriculture central to addressing poverty, hunger, climate change, and the sustainable use of natural resources over the next 15 years.

Figure 2. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals established in 2016 (UN, 2016)

Current Situation

Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas (CAHRAs) are often plagued with restoring many different areas in the aftermath of a period of unrest. While multidimensional, the focus often goes predominantly to national security, economic stability, and infrastructure redevelopment. As such, food poverty and insecurity are often overlooked and remain a pressing issue. The Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC), published yearly, provides a comprehensive analysis of global, regional and national acute food insecurity in the preceding year. [GRFC 2024] Published by the Food Security Information Network (FSIN) in support of the Global Network against Food Crises (GNAFC), the report is a collaborative effort among 16 partners to achieve a consensus-based assessment of acute food insecurity and malnutrition in countries with food crises, aiming to inform humanitarian and development action. The 2024 report can be found in the 'Additional Resources' section of this study guide.

Acute food insecurity refers to a situation where populations face life-threatening food deprivation. A food crisis is therefore defined as a situation where urgent action to protect and save lives due to acute food insecurity, and exceeds the local resources and capacities to respond.
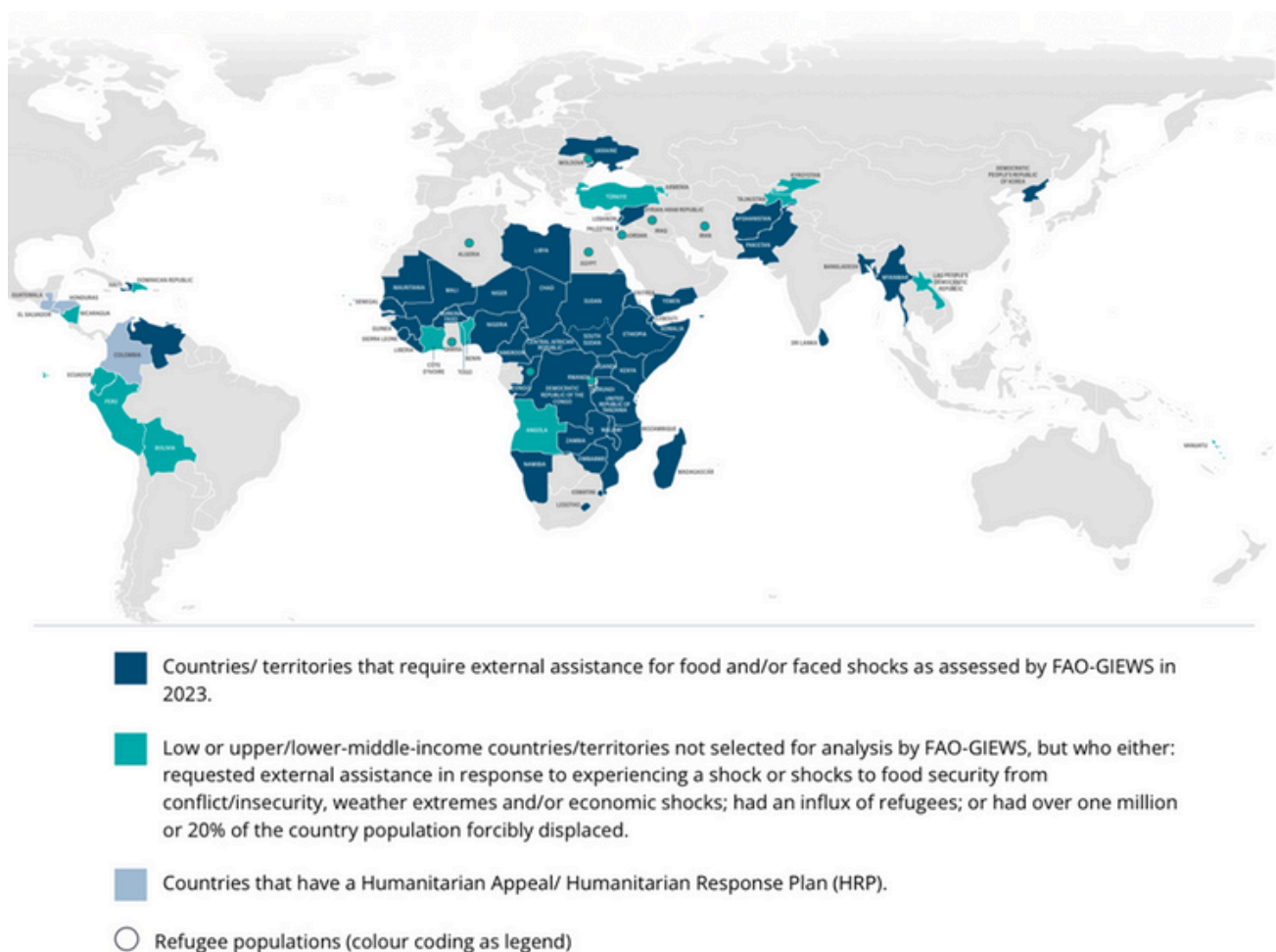

■ Countries/ territories that require external assistance for food and/or faced shocks as assessed by FAO-GIEWS in 2023.

■ Low or upper/lower-middle-income countries/territories not selected for analysis by FAO-GIEWS, but who either: requested external assistance in response to experiencing a shock or shocks to food security from conflict/insecurity, weather extremes and/or economic shocks; had an influx of refugees; or had over one million or 20% of the country population forcibly displaced.

■ Countries that have a Humanitarian Appeal/ Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).

○ Refugee populations (colour coding as legend)

Figure 3: Countries/territories included in the GRFC 2024. (Global Report on Food Crises, 2024)

Current Situation

In 2023, 134.5 million people across 20 areas were facing hunger due to conflict, which is the primary driver of acute food insecurity globally. Of these, 36.4 million children were considered acutely malnourished in 2023. Currently, conflict is causing acute levels of food insecurity in Gaza, Sudan and Yemen [Action against Hunger]. In particular, conflict in Sudan has created the world's largest internal displacement crisis which has detrimental impacts on hunger and nutrition, especially for women and children. [GRFC 2024] Conflict in Ethiopia is affecting agricultural livelihoods, hence putting pressure on the food chain, and intensified conflicts in Myanmar and Haiti are leading to further displacement and restricted access to food and assistance. Moreover, the withdrawal of UN peacekeeping missions in Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia will likely create security vacuums that can be exploited by armed groups, leading to another cycle of conflict and post-conflict rehabilitation. As such, it is instrumental to address the problem at its root and create robust agricultural frameworks to prevent further detrimental impact of conflicts on civilians.

Past attempts to solve the issue

The UN Security Council passed a resolution acknowledging that hunger drives forced displacement, and hence forced displacement can have a devastating effect on agricultural production. [Link] And Resolution 2417, which focuses on conflict-induced hunger such as through the effects of war as well as through disrupting markets and increased food prices, was unanimously adopted in 2018. [Link]

The Rome Statement on Water Scarcity in Agriculture was discussed in 2017 with partners and stakeholders of the Global Framework for Action to Cope with Water Scarcity in Agriculture in a Changing Climate ('Global Framework'). The statement notes that conflict over resources like water and arable land will only intensify as resources become scarcer. Agriculture accounts for 70% of water withdrawals, and is the main driver of biodiversity loss. Yet, 30% of produced food is wasted or lost after harvest, before even reaching the consumer. The mission of the Global Framework is to support measurable, significant and sustainable progress on improving and adapting agricultural systems, given increasing water scarcity and changing climates. [Link]

One solution to consider for food systems that contribute to peaceful and healthy communities is small-scale farming. More than 2 billion people depend on the 500 million small farms worldwide for their livelihoods. Firstly, small-scale farms predominantly serve domestic and local markets, where there is more civic and social engagement, trust, and attachment to local cultures and communities. Small farms invest and spend in local economies, creating jobs and opportunities and reducing the need to migrate but leading to resilient and peaceful communities developing. Furthermore, small-scale farmers tend to employ sustainable practices, which often rely on intricate knowledge of the local land and ecosystems passed on from the long history in family-owned farms. While small-scale farming systems are responsible for more than half the calories produced globally, it is often these farmers that struggle to feed their own families; their land rights are frequently infringed, their incomes are undermined by changing market prices and regulations, and they are disproportionately affected by climate change. The success of small-scale farmers is also dependent on their representatives having a voice - social dimensions that influence their functioning. Nonetheless, small-scale farming has potential in building global peace and food security, and still has importance in trying times. Whereas in countries where conflict endangers food security, long-term development investment is crucial to break the vicious circle of hunger and conflict. For example, in Western Sudan, water-based tensions between nomadic pastoralists have reduced through rehabilitating, constructing and managing water points. These longer-term investments bring about lasting impact that address the links between economic factors, natural resource management, and social inclusion.

Past attempts to solve the issue

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the world's largest humanitarian organisation, and delivers food aid in emergencies, works with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience, and is the leading provider of school meals with around 21.4 million children having received nutritious meals, school snacks or take-home rations in 2023. An estimated 152 million people received assistance from WFP in 2023 alone, in over 120 countries and territories. [Link]

A twice-yearly report on acute food insecurity in countries affected by conflict, titled Monitoring Food Security in Countries with Conflict Situations, is published jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Food Programme, designated for members of the UN Security Council. [Link] The 2021 issue covers the acute food insecurity situation in regions where conflict and insecurity are the primary driver, as well as other key food insecurity drivers such as COVID-19 and how conflict and insecurity frequently interlink with – and sometimes exacerbate – them.

While the FAO-WFP report does not cover refugee crises, Action Against Hunger has conducted emergency response work in Yemen, Bangladesh with the Rohingya refugee emergency, the Democratic Republic of Congo amidst the Ebola epidemic, post-hurricane Nicaragua, post-earthquake in Turkey and Syria, and more. For example, in post-flood Afghanistan, hygiene kits were distributed, shelters rebuilt, and safe water sources restored. [Link]

Case study 1: 1972 Sahel crisis

The 1972 Mission to the Sahel addressed the aftermath of the drought that ploughed the Sahel, of which the United Nations Strategy (UNISS) defines the political region to include 10 countries in West Africa – Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Nigeria. [Link]

Five years of relentless drought had a detrimental impact on these countries, claiming at least 100,00 deaths in 1973 alone, most of whom were children. Not only had famine swept through nations, but camels and cattle herds had been wiped out, and the livelihood of some two million pastoral people living there vanished. For an already impoverished region, this would be yet another potential source of social or political turmoil for generations to come. Grain shipments rushed to Africa through the 1973 summer prevented starvation deaths from climbing towards the feared numbers noted by observers.

Past attempts to solve the issue

However, despite observations from the USA and the UN noting that the states of the Sahel appeared helpless to deal with the drought, no contingency plans were made to address the situation until it reached overwhelming heights by 1972. Even after food shipments arrived in large quantities, there was little capacity in the relief effort to monitor their proper use or measure their impact, despite evidence of waste and discrimination in distribution – where ethnic or political rivalries influenced inequities that arose in the provision of food to those suffering the most from the drought. And despite former French colonisation in the area, their involvement and support was barely present. US involvement in the Sahel drought relief began in 1968 following requests from Mali, Niger and Senegal for emergency food rations for more than a million people suffering from crop failures. Yet, many who did consume food sent from the US were weakened further by violent diarrhoea as their systems could not digest the coarse grains.

Overall, total bilateral aid to the Sahel from the major donors, including the USA, France, UK, Germany, Canada, Japan and other Europeans, was little more than $50 million per annum, making up less each year than the same donors gave to Ghana alone. Even a decade after independence, the Sahel remained poor almost beyond measure – of the thirteen least developed countries in the world in 1971 identified by the UN Economic and Social Council, four were in the Sahel: Mali, Chad, Upper Volta, and Niger. The latter two also appeared to have a negative growth rate, and Senegal had no growth rate at all for 1960–1970.

The Sahelian zone is considered to have its agriculture mainly devoted to cereal crops, with its climate featuring summer rainfall and a long, eight-month long dry season – both of which are especially vulnerable to climatic hazards. Under the aegis of FAO, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) expressed willingness to fund a first FAO–SIDA Mission to inquire into problems with the advance of the desert and soil erosion in the Sahelian zone. What makes the FAO–SIDA Mission so important to the Sahel is its multidisciplinary approach to land protection, as well as considering the agricultural development of a fragile and complex myriad of ecosystems in a vast desert and semidesert area. The *Comité permanent inter-états de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel* (CILSS) was founded, an international committee to combat the Sahelian drought.

Development of the Sahel depends on environment protection and ecology safeguarding, in order to provide a livelihood for present and future populations. The need, therefore, to increase agriculture development whilst protecting the environment, may be approached with short- and long-term approaches but which may be at odds with each other, especially given the uncertainty of their impact. Nonetheless, the Mission also brought to light the need for ensuring the economic and social development of the countries in question, in addition to rehabilitating the situation in the agricultural and alimentary spheres.

Past attempts to solve the issue

Case study 2: 2010 Pakistan aid

Severe flooding caused by heavy monsoon rains affected over 5.1 million people in Sindh and Balochistan provinces of southern Pakistan in late July 2010. The floods also left 0.8 million hectares of damaged or destroyed crops, including cotton, rice, sugarcane, pulses and vegetables, as well as 5 million affected livestock – over 800,000 animals were lost, and surviving livestock suffered from heightened disease risk and parasite infestation, and lacked feed and veterinary support. Overall, more than $9 billion in losses were incurred by the agriculture sector, 80% of which were from the crop sub-sector, meaning that food production in the immediate future stood at risk of being compromised. With around 70% of the population depending on agriculture for their livelihood, the Pakistan Floods Rapid Response Plan was launched in September 2011 to address immediate needs.

[Link] The FAO's 2010 flood response reached some 900,000 families, consisting of winter and spring planting inputs, livestock support and irrigation repair. Flood modelling and mapping was also undertaken using satellite imagery, computer modelling and telemetry, to forecast the impact of future floods.

[Link] Efforts in Pakistan continue to date, with a recent implementation of a European Union-funded programme to revive water resources in Balochistan, to ensure smarter use of the province's already-limited water resources in agriculture, and improved rangeland management for livestock rearing. [Link] The Pakistan Floods Relief and Early Recovery Response Plan is the largest UN appeal on record, having requested nearly $2 billion towards efforts to support the people of Pakistan in overcoming the ongoing crisis. [Link]

Case study 3: MOZAMBIQUE: UN AGENCIES COMBINE EFFORTS TO HELP FARMERS (CFS, 2014)

The Government of Mozambique, with the assistance of WFP, FAO, IFAD, and UN Women, has successfully executed a collaborative program called "Building Commodity Value Chains and Market Linkages for Farmers' Associations," which had benefited over 11,000 farming families by the end of 2011. This initiative is coordinated by the Government of Mozambique, supported by WFP, and carried out in collaboration with FAO and IFAD. The program is associated with WFP's global Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative that functions in 21 countries, merging WFP's demand for fundamental food with supply-side aid from partners to help smallholder farmers enhance their production and connect to markets, thereby increasing their income. In Mozambique, government bodies such as the Ministério da Agricultura (MINAG), the Ministério de Industria e Comercio (MIC), and the Ministério de Plano e Desenvolvimento (MPD) have played a vital coordination role at both the national and local levels, while District Services for Economic Activities (SDAEs) have provided agricultural extension workers.

Past attempts to solve the issue

For smallholders like Etalvinha, the program has yielded numerous advantages. Etalvinha, a resident of northern Zambezia province, belongs to one of the 14 farmers' organisations in Molocue involved in the joint initiative. The farmers received training to enhance their farming techniques and improve the quality of their products through specific cleaning methods that can be done at home. "I participated in a training conducted by FAO in March 2010. The training taught us how to plant our seeds in a different manner, how to irrigate our crops, and how to guarantee the quality of the seeds," shares Etalvinha. "Previously, I received low prices for my maize; now, I can sort the grains and secure better prices for higher quality maize."

WFP funded the construction of new community warehouses and on-farm silos to assist farmers in better storing their crops, enabling them to market their products at more competitive prices. The warehouses also served as a venue for collective sales, leading to more favourable pricing. IFAD's contribution involved setting up a guarantee fund managed by a local microfinance institution, designed to protect against loan defaults. The support from the government and IFAD allowed farmers and their partners to negotiate with financial institutions for optimal conditions, with contracts established between farmers' organisations and WFP acting as a form of collateral. Etalvinha fondly remembers, "The revenue generated from increased sales of maize and beans enables me to expand my production, educate my children, and attend to other family needs."

Points of Discussion

As outlined by the CFS (2014), common challenges to ensuring food security in Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas (CAHRAs) may include:

1. Inadequate governance structures to ensure institutional stability, transparency, accountability and rule of law and non-discrimination, which lead to taking of efficient decisions and underpin access to food and higher living standards;
2. War, conflict and lack of security that play a major role in deepening hunger and food insecurity; in fragile states, conflict, political instability and weak institutions intensify food insecurity;
3. Poverty and inadequate access to food, often resulting from high unemployment and not enough decent work; inadequate social protection systems; unequal distribution of productive resources such as land, water, credit and knowledge; insufficient purchasing power for low-waged workers and the rural and urban poor; and low productivity of resources;
4. Insufficient international and national investment in the agricultural sector and rural infrastructure, particularly for small-scale food producers;
5. Insufficient access by producers to relevant technologies, inputs and institutions;
6. Marginalisation and discrimination against vulnerable groups such as indigenous peoples, internally displaced persons or refugees, and social and cultural exclusion experienced by most of the victims of food insecurity and malnutrition;
7. Low levels of education and literacy impacting malnutrition, including detrimental feeding/behavioural practices.

Delegates must consider and address these factors that lead to food insecurity when drafting a resolution. Additionally, the CFS (2014) has also recommended various policy solutions to address food insecurity. In the interest of conciseness, this study guide will focus on those related to challenges faced by CAHRAs.

Points of Discussion

The Twin-Track Approach

According to the Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security (Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), 2009), a twin-track approach to food security includes:

1. Direct action to immediately tackle hunger for the most vulnerable and
2. Medium and long-term sustainable agricultural, food security, nutrition and rural development programmes to eliminate the root causes of hunger and poverty, including through the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food.

As the CFS (2014) details, "Attention must be paid to the immediate needs of those who are unable to meet their food and nutrition requirements, in line with the fundamental right to be free of hunger." The committee recommends an array of immediate actions such as emergency food assistance, payment of living wages to agricultural workers, nutrition interventions, cash transfers and other social protection instruments, access to inputs, and food price policy interventions. The committee emphasises the importance of focusing specifically on the nutritional requirements of women, especially those who are pregnant or breastfeeding, as well as children under two years old, particularly to prevent stunting.[1] They note that kids are among the groups most impacted by food insecurity and malnutrition, especially during crises and emergencies.

This is particularly relevant given the frail nature of many CAHRAs - many of them, including Yemen (111th), Burundi (108th), Nigeria (107th), and Venezuela (106th), are among the lowest-ranking in the Economist Impact's (2022) Global Food Security Index (GFSI) 2022, which demonstrates the urgent need for the implementation of frameworks to address the adverse situation of food insecurity in these countries.

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[1] As the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2015) defines, stunting is the impaired growth and development that children experience caused by various factors including poor nutrition, repeated infection, and inadequate psychosocial stimulation. Children are classified as stunted when their height-for-age measurement falls more than two standard deviations below the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards.
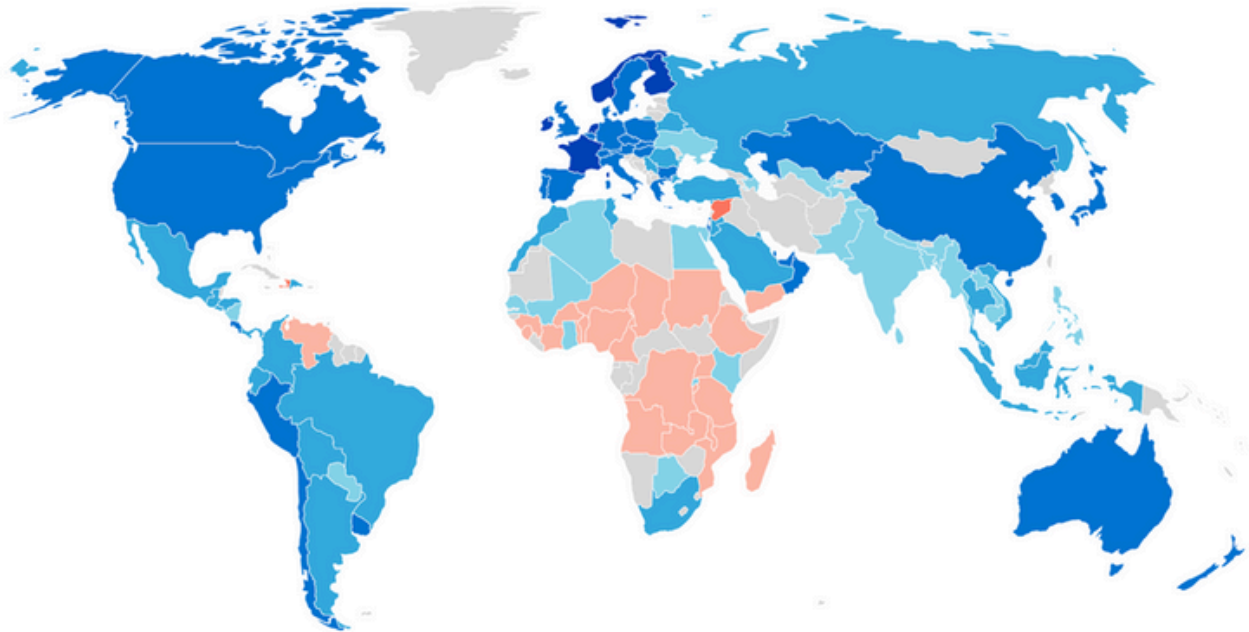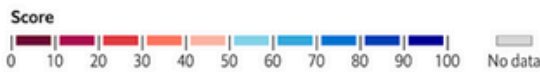
Points of Discussion

Figure 4: Global Food Security Index - Overall Score. (Economist Impact, 2022)

On the other hand, for medium to long-term actions, the CFS (2014), echoing upon the Anti-Hunger Programme, recommends the following:

1. Improving agricultural productivity and enhance livelihoods and food security and nutrition in poor rural communities;
2. Promoting productive activities and decent employment;
3. Developing and conserving natural resources;
4. Ensuring access to productive resources;
5. Expanding rural infrastructure, including capacity for food safety, plant and animal health;
6. Broadening market access.

While not an imminent priority, developing frameworks to achieve these aims may assist CAHRAs in ensuring long-term food security.

Points of Discussion

Importantly, the CFS (2014) notes that "[adequate] linkages are required between the two tracks of direct or immediate and medium/long-term interventions." The committee raises social protection instruments as an example: safety nets, mainly delivered as cash or food transfers, can create a connection between the two pathways, facilitating the shift from urgent humanitarian aid for persistent needs to reliable, long-term development strategies, which encompass public spending on infrastructure. These initiatives can enhance child nutrition and boost cognitive growth, educational achievements, and future workforce productivity, thus increasing earning potential and fostering development. Social protection systems may also support the pursuit of riskier yet more lucrative livelihood choices and help mitigate certain market failures. Finally, they can be designed in ways that also encourage local production and stimulate markets.

However, aspects of social protection are often "uncoordinated, short-term, externally funded, and not adequately reflected in food security and nutrition and poverty reduction strategies" (CFS, 2014). The CFS notes that many agricultural and food workers, along with their families, experience hunger and malnutrition because fundamental labour laws, minimum wage regulations, and social security systems often exclude rural workers. Ensuring formal employment and a guaranteed minimum living wage is crucial for the food security and nutrition of workers. It is essential to break the cycle of dependency and shift from short-term to more sustainable long-term support. Social programs ought to be formalised and incorporated into national legislation to guarantee ongoing sustainability and predictability. Existing local safety-net systems should be included with the goal of promoting them as vital stop-gap solutions when communities face hunger and food insecurity.
Furthermore, the CFS (2014) emphasises that countries in protracted or recurring crises pose bigger challenges for implementing the twin-track approach and may require special considerations, including context-specific approaches, which leads to the discussion in the subsequent section.

Points of Discussion

Addressing Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises

Protracted crises, as defined by the FAO (2024),

> [...] are contexts in which a significant proportion of the population is acutely vulnerable to hunger, disease and disruptions to livelihoods over prolonged periods. In these situations, undernourishment is severe, long-standing and almost three times more frequent than in other developing contexts.

Notably, of the 22 countries identified by the FAO (2010) as facing a protracted crisis, 9 are CAHRAs, which signifies the close link between CAHRAs, protracted crises, and food insecurity.

As the CFS (2014) notes, food insecurity remains high and ongoing in nations experiencing extended crises. These nations face ongoing natural disasters or conflicts (though for CAHRAs it is often the latter), along with inadequate institutional capacity to address the challenges. Countries in prolonged crises often struggle to recover from isolated events. It is essential to acknowledge that they frequently encounter sustained or recurring cycles of disaster that threaten not just people's lives but also their means of survival. The typical short-term emergency and relief support provided by the international community has not effectively disrupted this cycle of crisis. Extended crises require specifically designed and targeted assistance that meets the urgent need to save lives while also tackling the root causes of food insecurity and implementing disaster risk reduction strategies. Greater attention should also be given to the significant impact on women and children, along with the importance of integrating a gender perspective in responses to crises.

Points of Discussion

The CFS (2014) recommends the following for addressing food insecurity in protracted crises-ridden countries:

1. Support further analysis and deeper understanding of people's livelihoods and coping mechanisms in protracted crises in order to strengthen their resilience and enhance the effectiveness of assistance programmes;
2. Support the protection, promotion and rebuilding of livelihoods, and the institutions that support and enable livelihoods, in countries in protracted crisis;
3. Examine the procedures for external assistance to countries in protracted crisis to ensure it matches the needs, challenges and institutional constraints on the ground taking into consideration best practices.
4. Adopt a comprehensive approach to food security in protracted crises encompassing both emergency response and support to sustainable livelihoods;
5. Lead the UN system to promote better coordinated multistakeholder participation in the development and implementation of country-led, comprehensive plans of action in a small number of countries affected by protracted crises;
6. Develop mechanisms to engage local organizations in strengthening key institutions (i.e. markets, social kinships);
7. Establishing mechanisms for stronger partnerships and collaboration with regional institutions;
8. Support mechanisms for consultation and policy dialogue to increase understanding and collaborative efforts to deal with food security and nutrition in protracted crises.

Key Stakeholders / Blocs

Major agricultural producing/ exporting countries

- Main exporting countries – do I want to develop new frameworks? What incentive? Where is the money?

The top ten agricultural producers in the world, in descending order, are China, the United States, Brazil, India, Russia, France, Mexico, Japan, Germany, and Turkey (Jain, 2024). These countries are responsible for exporting most of the world's food. Thus, they play a key role in mediating food insecurity in conflict zones as they have control over their food exports.

Their approach to developing agricultural frameworks for CAHRAs is likely to balance economic interests with humanitarian concerns. They also emphasise increasing agricultural productivity through technological advancements. These major producers often advocate for policies facilitating international trade and reducing barriers to agricultural exports, reflecting their position as top exporters by value. They may seek new export opportunities in CAHRAs to generate revenue and potential trade opportunities. As the U.S. Department of Agriculture (2024) notes,

Continental Africa is also expected to become an increasingly important participant in global trade and an important trading partner with the United States. The continent has more than 1.4 billion people and the population is expected to continue growing swiftly. Projected changes in demographic, income, and food demand patterns in Africa offer potential trade opportunities.

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Key Stakeholders / Blocs

Countries experiencing food insecurity/ conflict

- Insecure countries: how do I beg for money/ food? How do I convince countries to develop new frameworks?

As conflict and food insecurity unfortunately often go hand in hand, this bloc of countries is desperate to find solutions to address food insecurity and hunger in their nation. As the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) (2022) has indicated, "armed conflict and other threats to security pushed 139 million people into acute food insecurity in 2021 – an increase of almost 40 million people compared to the year before." Additionally, the U.S. Mission Geneva (2017) has noted that more than 20 million people in South Sudan, Somalia, the Lake Chad Basin, and Yemen were facing famine and starvation.

These countries often require significant international support and targeted interventions to address their food security challenges, making them key stakeholders in discussions about agricultural frameworks for CAHRAs. These countries may argue that food is a basic human right; thus, all states must cooperate in ensuring this right is realised in every part of the world.

Guiding Questions

- Do richer/ more developed countries hold responsibility for food insecurity in poorer/ less developed countries?

    - Should they be responsible for addressing food insecurity in the latter?
    - Do they have an obligation to do so?
    - If the answer to any of these questions is a "yes", how do we enforce such responsibilities and obligations? How do we garner the support of the responsible countries?

- How do we ensure that the voices of recipient countries are heard when drafting policies to address food insecurity in these countries?

- How do we ensure stable food supply lines during crises?

- How can countries with higher technological expertise and development contribute to addressing food insecurity?

- What insights do past attempts at addressing food insecurity give to us?

Additional Resources

https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs1314/GSF/GSF_Version_3_EN.pdf

https://www.fao.org/4/F7795E/f7795e05.htm

https://www.fsinplatform.org/report/global-report-food-crises-2024/

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