

**UniCEF**

TOPIC: **Child malnutrition**


# SOCOMUN XXVI

UNICEF

Child Malnutrition

Hello, my name is Megan Lee and I will be one of your co-chairs at SOCOMUN this year! I am a senior at SMCHS and this will be my third and sadly, last year in the MUN program. MUN is a unique experience that allows students like you to debate international affairs and collaborate with your fellow delegates to develop solutions. I really enjoy MUN because it has given me insight on international issues and it has enhanced my overall leadership skills. I have also formed many new friendships by participating in various MUN conferences across Southern California. My favorite topics to debate at MUN conferences are human right topics in committees such as UNICEF and UNHRC. Besides MUN, I have a passion for soccer and I am a member of ASB and National Honor Society at SMCHS.

I hope you will enjoy your experience at SOCOMUN and continue to be involved with MUN. We will begin the conference with roll call followed by debate. During debate, delegates will give a speech regarding the background and solutions on the topic of child malnutrition. To discuss child malnutrition in more depth with your fellow delegates, I encourage you to motion for caucuses throughout debate, in which you can form resolution groups and collaborate with other delegates to come up with solutions on the topic. It is extremely important to research the topic thoroughly and understand your country’s policy. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email me at socomununicef@gmail.com . I look forward to meeting all of you at the conference and I wish you all the best of luck!

**Background:**

Food is essential for human survival, yet many people around the world lack the proper food and nutrition to sustain themselves. Malnutrition is a broad term that is caused by an imbalance in nutrients and it is defined within two conditions: undernourishment and over-nourishment. When one is undernourished, he or she lacks certain vital nutrients, which can cause slow development and growth, weight loss, and fatigue. Over-nourishment refers to the consumption of too much food and nutrients to the point where it becomes dangerous to one’s health, leading to obesity, diabetes, and heart problems. Malnutrition affects people of all ages, gender, and health; however, this condition is more prominent in developing areas where there are food shortages.

When referring to child malnutrition, UNICEF primarily focuses on the undernourishment aspect. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), malnutrition is estimated to contribute to more than one-third of all child deaths, as well as half of all the deaths children under the age of five, yet it is rarely described as the direct cause. There are currently over 156 million children affected by undernourishment and it is estimated that two out of every four children affected by malnutrition live in South Asia, while one in three live in South Africa. Undernutrition can cause children to be at greater risk to infections and diseases and poor nutrition in the first thousand days of a child’s life can lead to stunted growth, which is an irreversible condition that is closely related to impaired cognitive ability, as well as reduced performance in school and in work.

There are many causes of malnutrition, the main being that many families cannot afford or do not have access to nutritious foods, such as fruits, vegetables, and meat. Thus, these families often lean towards foods that are high in fat, sugar, and salt, since they are relatively inexpensive and readily available. Another cause of child malnutrition is due to poor feeding practices, such as inadequate breastfeeding and not ensuring that the child is receiving enough nutritious food.

In 2000, the United Nations created eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a blueprint agreed by all countries to meet the needs of the world’s poorest. The first goal is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. The first target of this goal is to reduce the proportion of people who make less than $1 daily by half. The second target of this goal reduce the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by half. Although this goal has encouraged many countries to take action to end child malnutrition, this issue is still prevalent in all countries. Therefore, we must work together to end this growing issue as soon as possible.

**Possible Solutions:**

UNICEF aims to improve the lives of children who do not have an adequate amount of food. Since malnutrition affects every country of the world, we must find creative but logical solutions that diminish every aspect of malnutrition and alleviate the suffering that takes place among underprivileged children. Make sure that your country’s position is in favor of the solutions you are proposing. Also, keep in mind that funding for resolutions is not an issue in our committee, as we will assume that finding will be taken care of by the World Bank and the Fifth Committee. While following viable solutions could be implemented to help end child malnutrition, I encourage you to create your own solutions and work with your fellow delegates to improve your solutions and form resolutions.

UNICEF has created Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF), a safe and cost effective treatment to help severely malnourished children receive proper nutrients and gain weight. RUTFs are energy dense, micronutrient enhance pastes that consist of lipid-rich ingredients. Despite that most RUTFs are produced in and imported from economically advanced countries, UNICEF has been working towards implementing the technology used to produce RUTFs in developing nations. RUTFs should only be used for medical protocol and should not replace routine nutritional practices or normal household food. However, RUTFs are great resources for children who suffer from severe acute malnutrition, since they provide all the nutrients required for recovery and they do not spoil easily after opening.

Another possible solution is for all countries to create government bodies, either as branches of their existing healthcare departments or as new bodies, which will focus on increasing awareness of malnutrition, adopting UN resolutions and conventions, and establishing an annual report on the statistics of child malnutrition in their respective country to present to the General Assembly. Through the creation of these government bodies, countries will hopefully be encouraged to take further action on this pressing issue.

It is important to think of short-term and long-term solutions. Remember that your short-term solutions should be practical and benefit your long-term solutions in the future. Long-term solutions are much more complex and generally are accomplished over an extended period of time. To combat child malnutrition, research the underlying factors, such as the economy, government, culture, and begin developing your solutions based upon these factors.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Is child malnutrition prevalent in your country? If so, what percentage of the population is affected by this issue?
2. What is your country currently doing to help children get access to proper nutrition?
3. Does your country support and programs or non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) that help children receive more food? If so, which ones?
4. What underlying factors regarding the economy, government, and culture affect your country and the problem of child malnutrition? What solutions can be implemented to resolve these factors?
5. To what extent or if at all should international organizations intervene on a country’s sovereignty to combat the issue of child malnutrition?

Works Cited

1. "5 Ways to End Malnutrition." *Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition*. N.p., 14 Oct. 2014. Web. 08 Apr. 2017. <[http://www.gainhealth.org/knowledge-centre/five-ways-can-help-end- malnutrition-3/](http://www.gainhealth.org/knowledge-centre/five-ways-can-help-end-%09malnutrition-3/)>.

This website offers solutions to help end child malnutrition. It has five separate steps that will help end malnutrition, including deworming, micronutrient supplements, micronutrient fortification, biofortification, and research development to increase crop yields. These five steps, both separately and together can help end hunger and malnutrition. This information can be used in the solution portion of the paper. Each proposed step can be used as an individual solution or they can all be combined into one solution.

1. "10 Facts About Malnutrition in Children." *The Borgen Project*. N.p., 19 June 2014. Web. 08

Apr. 2017. <<https://borgenproject.org/10-facts-malnutrition-children/>>.

This website states a handful of basic facts on Child Malnutrition. It uses direct quotes from UNICEF and includes hyperlinks to other website that have more detailed information about each of the facts. This is a good place to start researching before you write the position paper. It provides a brief overview of the topic which can be used when writing the Background Information portion of the position paper.

1. "Action Against Hunger Logo." Action Against Hunger | ACF-USA - Ending World Hunger & Malnutrition. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Apr. 2017. <http://www.actionagainsthunger.org>

The Action Against Hunger, an NGO, has strived for nearly 40 years to combat hunger in close to 50 countries. Over 90% of all donations collected went towards funding program activities. This NGO gathers data which focuses on both direct and indirect causes for malnutrition and then this data is spread and shared in order to more effectively improve nutrition. This NGO promotes long-term solutions, as well as predicting areas of extreme malnutrition. Action Against Hunger also strives to increase public involvement and donations, in order to pay for their beneficial projects and programs.

1. "Health News Articles - US News Health." U.S. News & World Report. U.S. News & World Report, n.d. Web. 08 Apr. 2017.
2. <http://health.usnews.com/health-news/health-wellness/articles/2015/09/16/malnutrition-its-not-always-what-you-think>

This source provides a new perspective on the idea of malnutrition and the types of people this crisis effects. The article states that when a child does not consume enough nutrients, they do not grow to their full potential. Solutions which this source provides include the utilization of iron and vitamin supplements in toddlers and monitor their growth by using a growth chart. This source fits into the background and solutions aspects of the topic synopsis. It also focuses on a specific area of malnutrition and possible solutions involved with malnourishment in the United States and other nations struggling with a similar issue. This article sheds new light on the different areas of malnutrition, and how this crisis effects nations differently, partly based off of their economic stances.

1. King, M.S. Joe. "Effects of Malnutrition on Children." LIVESTRONG.COM. Leaf Group, 03 Nov. 2013. Web. 08 Apr. 2017. <http://www.livestrong.com/article/446343-nutritional-effects-of-malnutrition-on-children/>

This source describes some of the effects malnutrition has on children. One of them being stunting, is a major long-term negative effect which does not allow a child’s body to grow to the best of its ability. Malnutrition may also cause lacks of vitamins and minerals, which then leads to a multitude of other issues. This article, as it provides specific effects of malnutrition, encourages solutions which target these effects. The goal of this source is to spread information about malnourishment effects, as well as the details which go along with them. This source goes along with the background part of the topic synopsis. The information provided then leads to the idea of solutions which target the effects of malnutrition on children, such as the ones listed above.

1. Nordqvist, Joseph. "Malnutrition Kills Over 3 Million Children Annually Worldwide." Medical News Today. MediLexicon International, 06 June 2013. Web. 08 Apr. 2017.

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/261533.php>

This source provides facts revolving around child malnutrition, as well as maternal malnutrition. This source points out that the first 1,000 days of a child’s life are crucial and determine their future health, along with how they will be able to assist their nation’s economy further down the road. Child malnutrition negatively effects the young generations economies are dependent on. Throughout the next fifteen years, it is expected that almost 500 million children will be at risk of permanent health problems caused by malnutrition. To decrease the amount of children who suffer from malnutrition, mothers and families should be educated on the topic and provided with nutritious food. This article is useful as a source of factual evidence relating to malnutrition. The source, as it credits United Nations reports and quotes important resources, is credible in its statements. The point of this article is too inform readers about the topic and the different aspects of malnutrition, especially maternal causes.

1. "Nutrition." *World Food Programme*. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Apr. 2017.

<<http://www1.wfp.org/nutrition>>.

The World Food Programme is a nonprofit organization created by the United Nations to help end world hunger and malnutrition. The main page on nutrition, focuses on statistics on malnutrition and the goals and purposes of the WFP. There are many hyperlinks and separate pages of the website included in this page which can provide more detailed information. This website can help when writing the solution portion of the paper as well as the background information section. The statistic provided can be useful for the background portion of the paper, while the information on the program itself can help with the United Nations Involvement section, and can be used as information for past/current actions taken by the UN.

1. "Official USA Site." Save the Children. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Apr. 2017.

<http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.6115947/k.B143/Official_USA_Site.htm>

This source comes from the Save the Children organization, which plays a major role in decreasing child malnutrition. They provide young children with an early start in nutrition, which can only improve their health and success in the future. Today, Save the Children provides assistance in over 120 countries. This source helps grow an idea of what type of solutions should be created, and whether or not the utilization of versatile organizations is an option. The information provided on Save the Children’s website falls under involvement of NGO’s and other organizations in the child malnutrition crisis. In possible solutions there may be other organizations like Save the Children, which offer other aspects of aid to those in need or hit by disaster.

1. 10. Rao, By: Arathi. "6 Steps to Reducing Global Child Malnutrition." *ONE*. N.p., 25 June 2013. Web. 08 Apr. 2017. <

[https://www.one.org/us/2013/06/20/6-steps-to-reducing-global-](https://www.one.org/us/2013/06/20/6-steps-to-reducing-global-%20%20child-malnutrition/)

[child-malnutrition/](https://www.one.org/us/2013/06/20/6-steps-to-reducing-global-%20%20child-malnutrition/)>.

This article contains information on the UN progress that was made in 2013, towards ending child malnutrition. It also explains a 6-step-plan to solve or temporarily end global child malnutrition. Each step has a paragraph-length explanation as to why malnutrition exists, and how to solve it using the steps. This would be extremely helpful with the solution portion of the position paper because it explains 6 different solutions in detail, which can also be used as one large 6-step solution.

11. "U.N. Agencies Commend Progress Made Against Child Malnutrition In Uganda, Urge Continued Actioned Progress Made Against Child Malnutrition In Uganda." *ReliefWeb*.

N.p., 07 Apr. 2017. Web. 08 Apr. 2017. <[http://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/un-agencies-commend- progress-made-against-child-malnutrition-uganda-urge-continued](http://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/un-agencies-commend-%09progress-made-against-child-malnutrition-uganda-urge-continued)>.

This website discussed the progress that has been made in Uganda against child malnutrition, and how the United Nations reacted to their accomplishments. It also includes facts and statistics on malnutrition, worldwide, rather than just in Uganda. This website would be useful, especially for delegates who are in the African Bloc, for UN Involvement to show past involvement, Country Policy (if the delegate is the country of Uganda), and possibly in Background Information because there are many statistics included in the article.