

**UniCEF**

TOPIC: **Child malnutrition**



# SOCOMUN XXVII

UNICEF

Child Malnutrition

Hello delegates! My name is Nastaszia Mehring and I will be your Chair in the UNICEF Committee at SOCOMUN. As a senior, this is my fourth year in the MUN program, through which I have developed self-confidence and have been allowed to collaborate with other delegates while improving my public-speaking skills. I believe that MUN is extremely beneficial in developing awareness of the issues our world faces today. At Santa Margarita, I am a Full IB candidate, play volleyball, and participate in track and field. Outside of school, I have played club volleyball for the past five years.

At SOCOMUN, I hope that you all take advantage of the opportunities made available to you, in order to improve your skills within the MUN program. To begin committee, we will start with roll call and then enter debate. Delegates will be able to give a speech and motion for caucuses. Be prepared to collaborate with other delegates. While in committee, delegates are expected to stay on task, focused on the issue of child malnutrition. Read the topic synopsis and be sure to research the topic in depth! If you have any questions, feel free to email me at [socomununicef@gmail.com](mailto:socomununicef@gmail.com). I look forward to meeting you all at the conference, and seeing what solutions you will propose during committee, good luck!

My name is Colby Wenk, and I will be your Legal. I am a junior who attends Santa Margarita, I play volleyball and do many extracurricular activities such as MUN and different charity work. I have been in MUN for 2 years so far and I intend to stay in it for as long as possible. I enjoy MUN because it allows me to practice my speech and debate skills and helps me know what is going on in the world. As far as volleyball goes, I have played for 6 years and will continue to play for the club 949 and for my school.

My name is Lyndsey Issa, your Secretary, and I am a sophomore. This is my second year of MUN. As a freshman I was privileged enough to travel to UCSB to compete at Gaucho MUN, and later on this year I will be attending the conference held by UC Berkeley. One fun fact about me is that I have been to 5 of the 7 continents.

**Background:**

Malnutrition causes the death of over 3 million children annually, which accounts for more than 50% of the mortalities of children under the age of 5. Child malnutrition refers to the disproportion of nutrients, either undernourishment or over-nourishment, both proven to be dangerous to one’s health. Undernourishment is prevalent in developing countries, which lack proper wholesome food supplies which the poverty stricken are able to afford. Over-nourishment results in an unbalanced diet of an excess amount of food or nutrients. Although one may be provided with a sufficient amount of food, their diet may not contain the necessary nutrients to allow them to develop fully and normally. Obesity in children under the age of 5 is said to be rapidly increasing, as it effected 42 million children in the year 2013. Children with severe food allergies may even suffer from malnutrition. The first 1,000 days of a child’s life is a crucial time of development which determines the child’s future health. During this “window of opportunity”, it is vital that the child be provided with a healthy diet full of nutrients. In the next 15 years, it is estimated that close to 500 million children may face permanent health issues caused by malnutrition. Such issues include stunting, which restricts the growth of a child’s body and disabling the body from ever being fully developed. Children suffering from stunting are at a less than average height for their age. Stunting not only physically limits a child, it also mentally incapacitates them to reach their full potential and inhibits their prospective learning, effecting their ability to contribute to their communities in the future. Stunting may also cause disproportional weight gain and obesity as a child becomes an adult. While stunting is being combated, it is not declining effectively, and meanwhile, obesity continues to rise. Wasting, another effect of malnutrition or disease, amplifies weakness in the immune system and slows development. The weight of children effected by wasting are considered below average for their age. In 2016, it was recorded that almost 52 million children under the age of 5 were suffering from wasting, 17 million of these children being severely effected. Asia and Africa retain the highest concentration of three forms of malnutrition, being stunting, obesity, and wasting. These are just a few of the countless health-related effects of malnutrition.

Causes of malnutrition include insufficient dietary intake and disease, which lead to a lack of a diverse diet in the household, improper feeding practices, and ineffective health care systems combined with the violation of basic human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 declares the human right to food. This was reemphasized by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which discusses the human right to health and the duty of governments to uphold this right by combating malnutrition and disease. UNICEF’s actions and future approaches targeting child malnutrition remain focused on the rights-based aspect of this issue. Consisting of both short-term and long-tern effects, malnutrition most often develops into a detrimental cycle. Short-term effects include mortality and disability, while long-term effects influence a child’s learning abilities and economic achievement. These factors, usually tied along with poverty, then feed back into the cycle, causing inadequate financial stability and food security within the home.

Infant and child breast feeding, along with zinc and vitamin supplements, are highly beneficial in mitigating the effects of child malnutrition. When discussing child malnutrition, it is also important to consider maternal malnutrition as well, which has caused over 800,000 newborn deaths annually. And a fourth of the children who survived birth and the infant stage are considered physically below average. Additionally, if the mother is malnourished, her breast milk does not supply the proper nutrients to her child, catalyzing yet another case of child malnutrition and disabling normal development and growth of the child. Child malnutrition has the ability pose a threat to a nation’s economy, as their youth and growing generations are limited in their ability to economically assist the nation in the future.

**Possible Solutions:**

In correlation with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, UNICEF has partnered with the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in order to eliminate all forms of malnutrition by the year 2030.Solutions to reach this goal and assist children who face malnutrition daily are greatly needed. While possible solutions are given below, be sure create your own unique solutions to combat child malnutrition after completing your research. Verify that your solutions correlate with your country’s policies and specific situation, as to what type of malnourishment your country faces and the factors behind the issue. Consider both short-term and long-term solutions, and provide adequate information of these solutions’ purposes, goals, and how exactly they are to be implemented. Your solutions may evolve during committee, as you collaborate with other delegates and form resolutions. Solutions do not need to address monetary sponsorship or funding, as this is handled by the Fifth Committee and the World Bank. Investigate all causes behind malnutrition, including economic, geographical, and cultural factors.

The usage and distribution of micronutrient supplements is encouraged by GAIN, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. GAIN’s programs seek to reduce micronutrient shortages by 20% to 30% in 50 million children, as they supply these children and expecting mothers with powders containing multiple nutrients and lipid-based nutrient supplements. Biofortification is an effective technique in decreasing the lack of nutrients, by heightening the amount of micronutrients in the inexpensive staple foods which most people in developing countries can afford. These people are unable to purchase foods which naturally contain a plentitude of micronutrients, such as dairy, fruits, vegetables, and meats, therefore biofortification would be a viable and beneficial solution for them. Regarding food supply, development of increased crop yields could be investigated. Research in agricultural production could provide a solution for those who lack an adequate source and quantity of food. Greater crop yields could also lead to a decrease in prices, possibly enabling the impoverished to afford appropriate amounts of the healthy foods. Agricultural self-sufficiency may also be a focus for solutions targeting malnutrition, along with social and health protection of targeted populations.

The Action Against Hunger organization has fought against malnutrition in almost 50 countries within the last 40 years. Recognizing that the issue of child malnutrition is predictable and preventable, Action Against Hunger has collected data regarding the direct and indirect causes of this issue. Information gathered is then shared, as to increase the effectiveness of organizations’ efforts to enhance the nourishment of children across the globe. In 2015 alone, nutrition programs created by Action Against Hunger assisted over 1.5 million people and their broader health programs provided aid for over 3 million.

The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement works to provide all people with their right to food and proper nutrition. 46 leaders of developing countries have joined the SUN Movement in emphasizing efforts to decrease the rates of malnutrition. Under the UN Network for SUN, 50 leaders of developing country are involved in limiting the effects of the pressing matter at hand. These developing countries are aided by four global networks under the control of the SUN Lead Group, determined by the UN Secretary General, and the four networks being Donors, UN Agencies, Civil Society, and Business.

The lack of education, awareness, and available resources are major factors which contribute to the longevity of child malnutrition. Solutions for the broad topic of education and awareness should be focused on and tailored to the situation of a specific country or community, as the effects of malnutrition and the possible ways to respond to this pressing problem differ in each**.** The same applies to the issue of accessible resources, which includes supplies or aid from organization leaders. Consider discussing if organizations entering a country’s communities in order to assist in combating malnutrition are able to impose on the sovereignty of that nation. It is also important to consider the major role mothers have in the growth and development of their children, as they provide their children with nutrients throughout pregnancy then breast feeding and continue to control their child’s diet and the foods they consume throughout their youth. The health of a mother means the probable health of her child. The education of young women, this world’s future mothers, and the protection of their physical health is essential while tackling child malnutrition. The lack of data and necessary studies is another factor which adds to the damaging effects of child malnutrition. Without the ability to review and study the growth or decline of specific trends within nations, it becomes more difficult to distinguish between the mediocre and the highly efficient solutions or actions taking place. This information is vital to the overall approach solutions take when targeting child malnutrition.

**Questions to Consider:**

Delegates will not be required to answer these questions in committee. The purpose of these questions is to guide your research and aid the development of your solutions.

1. How is child malnutrition prevalent in your country? How is the population specifically effected?
2. What factors play a role in making child malnutrition a predominant issue in your country? How can your country target these factors in order to eliminate malnutrition all together?
3. What actions, if any, has your country previously taken to ensure proper nutrition? Have these past actions or solutions been effective, and how can you expand upon them?
4. Does your country support or utilize any programs or organizations to combat the issue of child malnutrition? If so, what are the goals of these organizations and what impactful steps have they taken to improve nutrition?
5. What methods would be most effective in educating the people of the communities within your country on how to enhance their children’s nutrition? How could your country provide them with the necessary resources to do so?
6. How can the international community and individual countries improve upon data collection and research and utilize this information to their full advantage?
7. How can your country assist in the rehabilitation of those who have suffered physical damage, especially that which is permanent, due to child malnutrition?

Works Cited

“5 Ways to End Malnutrition.” Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, 14 Oct. 2014, [www.gainhealth.org/knowledge-centre/five-ways-can-help-end-malnutrition-3/](http://www.gainhealth.org/knowledge-centre/five-ways-can-help-end-malnutrition-3/).

This article is all about solutions for the problem of malnutrition. It gives five in depth solutions with facts on how they would be effective. When assessing the article, it can be seen that it is a great article for looking for solutions but no so much for the background of the problem. This article is useful for inspiration when developing solutions; however, other resources should be referenced as well, as to ensure in-depth, thoughtful solutions.

"Action Against Hunger Logo." Action Against Hunger | ACF-USA - Ending World Hunger & Malnutrition. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Apr. 2018.

"Health News Articles - US News Health." U.S. News & World Report. U.S. News & World Report, n.d. Web. 08 Apr. 2018.

King, M.S. Joe. "Effects of Malnutrition on Children." LIVESTRONG.COM. Leaf Group, 03 Nov. 2013. Web. 08 Apr. 2018.

“Malnutrition.” UNICEF DATA, [https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/malnutrition/#](https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/malnutrition/).

This source gives data and statistics regarding child malnutrition from all around the world. This article goes into detail about prevalent issues relating to the topic such as growth stunting and wasting that is caused by undernutrition. This source also gives data about areas of the world where this problem is the most severe. This is an objective source. The article revolved around real world facts and there is no commentary given by the author. This source would be extremely helpful for the background information, due to the amount of facts and statistics included.

Martins, Vinicius J. B., et al. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, Molecular Diversity Preservation International (MDPI), June 2011,

[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3137999/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3137999/).

This source is lengthy, but it talks about the many issues regarding the topic. This article explains why childhood malnutrition is a problem and it also discusses problems relating to the issue. In the conclusion portion of this article, the author explains the steps that have previously been taken to help in the solving of this issue. The bulk of this article revolves around concrete facts. The facts, statistics, and detail provided make this source reliable and useful for background information.

Nordqvist, Joseph. "Malnutrition Kills Over 3 Million Children Annually Worldwide." Medical News Today. MediLexicon International, 06 June 2013. Web. 08 Apr. 2018.

“Nutrition.” UNICEF, [www.unicef.org/nutrition/](http://www.unicef.org/nutrition/).

This source targets all corners of the problem, as it discusses UN action and solutions. It covers all three aspects that need to be covered within a paper or speech, especially UN involvement. This article is highly informative, seeing that it is from the UN, a credible source, and covers a lot of information. Also, all of the information is brought together by facts, reinforcing the points the article makes.

“Outcome of Global Hunger Summit Major Step towards Ending 'Injustice of Malnutrition' – UN Officials | UN News.” United Nations, United Nations malnutrition, [https://news.un.org/en/story/2013/06/441812-outcome-global hunger-summit-major-step-towards-ending-injustice-malnutrition](https://news.un.org/en/story/2013/06/441812-outcome-global%20%09hunger-summit-major-step-towards-ending-injustice-malnutrition).

This source discusses some of the points that were brought up during the Nutrition for Growth summit, which was held in London. In this article the actions that were proposed at the summit, such as the Global Nutrition for Growth Compact, are explained in further detail. Additionally, UN officials such as UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of the UN FAO, give statements in regard to the summit. Concrete facts about the Nutrition for Growth summit are given, while it also goes into detail about a summit that was held in order to brainstorm solutions to the problem of child malnutrition.

“Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) - United Nations Partnerships for SDGs Platform.” United Nations, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=7483>.

This source provides information about SUN. SUN, also known as Scaling up Nutrition, is a movement led by countries that are committed to solving the malnutrition crisis that is prevalent in the world today. This source gives a background of the SUN movement and also gives a complete list of all the countries involved. This source is reliable, as it offers concrete facts about a movement to aid in the solving of malnutrition.

It discusses a movement that is facilitated by the UN, and therefore is able to provide information on UN involvement.

“Somalia: 1.4M Children to Suffer Acute Malnutrition This Year – UN Agency | UN News.” United Nations, United Nations, [https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/05/556402-somalia-14m-children-suffer-acute- malnutrition-year-un-agency](https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/05/556402-somalia-14m-children-suffer-acute-%09malnutrition-year-un-agency).

This article focuses on the harsh realities of how this problem effects the international, including the 1.4 million people in Somalia in need assistance. Also, included at the end is discussion about UN involvement and the $825 million that is currently being spent to assist with the issue of malnutrition.

“U.N. Agencies Commend Progress Made Against Child Malnutrition In Uganda, Urge Continued Action.” U.N. Agencies Commend Progress Made Against Child Malnutrition In Uganda, Urge Continued Action | WFP | United Nations World Food Programme – Fighting Hunger Worldwide, [https://wfp.org/news/news- release/un-agencies-commend-progress-made-against-child-malnutrition-uganda- urge-continued](https://wfp.org/news/news-%09release/un-agencies-commend-progress-made-against-child-malnutrition-uganda-%09urge-continued).

This source discusses the issue of child malnutrition in Uganda and in Africa in general. It also gives information about the specific agencies and organization of the UN that are involved with ending child malnutrition. This source brings up goals that the UN has in place to end child malnutrition. Additionally, this source discusses how past actions that the UN has taken will contribute to resolution of child malnutrition. This source is for the most part objective, as it discusses past UN actions and agencies involved. However, there are some people are quoted and their words can be seen as biased. This source would be extremely helpful regarding information on UN involvement, as it includes past UN actions taken and also UN agencies and organizations that were involved.

WHO, UNICEF. “Levels and Trends in Child Malnutrition.” UNICEF, WHO, The World Bank Estimates Child Malnutrition, <http://www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/jme_unicef_who_wb.pdf>

Written by a UN committee, this source tackles the problem of child malnutrition. It provides great background and UN involvement, and provides different issues an array of countries faces. This is a great article, seeing as it is directly from the UN and contains no bias. Could be helpful when creating solutions, considering the facts, effects, and information included.

“Why Malnutrition Is Still a Major Problem in the World.” Home - Medair, [http://medair.org/en/stories/why-malnutrition-is-still-a-major-problem-in-the- world/](http://medair.org/en/stories/why-malnutrition-is-still-a-major-problem-in-the-%09world/).

This article discusses the basics of child malnutrition and why it is still a problem in such an advanced world. When assessing the article, it does not go into depth on how to solve the problem, however it is a good article to start with for background and would be useful for this type of information.