



SIMUN X

*St. Ignatius Model United Nations
Tenth Annual Conference*

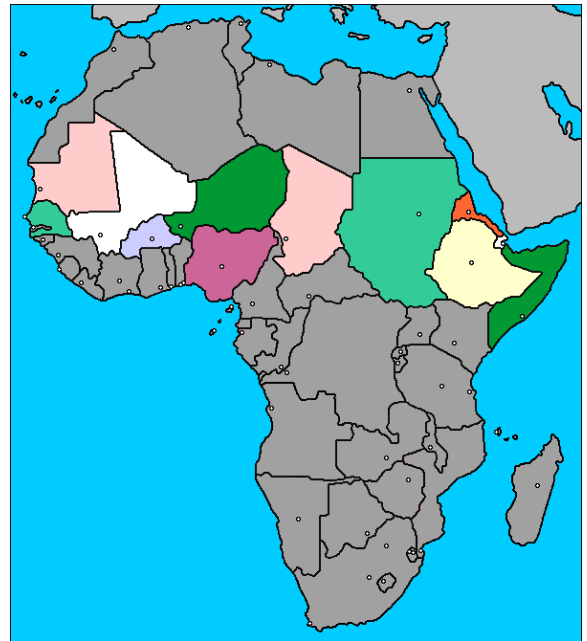
World Food Programme

**November 5, 2011
St. Ignatius College Prep | Chicago, IL**

Committee: World Food Programme
Chair: Alexa Daugherty
Political Officer: Tom Boyle
Vice Chair: Vaishnavi Paudel

Dear Delegates,

It is with immense pleasure that I welcome you to SIMUN X! My name is Alexa Daugherty, Class of 2012, and I'm your Chair for the World Food Programme as we debate famine in eastern Africa and rising food prices. Tom, a junior/ your political officer, and I have both lived abroad and thus experienced some very different perspectives on how government and daily life is run compared to here in America. As a result we find it imperative that, while researching, you make sure to keep your country's true viewpoint in mind - in the heat of debate remain unswayed by your personal opinions. My entire career as a MUNer has been spent as a delegate for an African country - making the continent and it's insatiable issues very dear to my heart. I look forward to creative debate over the course of our esteemed one day conference. We hope the issues raised throughout the following pages - issues that have been especially relevant this summer with CNN, The New York Times, BBC, and yes, even The Onion reporting on what has been Africa's worst famine in 60¹ years - will inspire you to a new stage of social awareness as well as result in innovative resolutions.



Additionally, if you require any advice, assistance, or clarification do not hesitate to contact me at: alexa.daugherty@students.ignatius.org or Tom at: thomas.boyle@students.ignatius.org.

See you in November,

Alexa Daugherty

Topic 1: Serious Deterioration in the Nutritional Status of the Eastern Sahel and Niger

¹<http://www.nytimes.com/cwire/2011/08/12/12climatewire-nations-fall-short-in-helping-124m-africans-13416.html>

Brief Overview/Introduction/History:

The World Food Programme (WFP) is a humanitarian organization working to provide 3.7 million tons of food to 90 million people in 73 undernourished countries². The WFP accomplishes much of its humanitarian efforts through partnerships with governments, other United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local communities in order to combat food insecurity and malnutrition. The World Food Programme defines malnutrition as: *a state in which the physical function of an individual is impaired to the point where he or she can no longer maintain natural bodily capacities such as growth, pregnancy, lactation, learning abilities, physical work and resisting and recovering from disease*. Through these partnerships the WFP strives to accomplish its five objectives: 1) to save lives, 2) to prepare for emergencies, 3) to restore lives after emergencies, 4) to reduce chronic hunger, and 5) to strengthen the capacity to reduce hunger³. The World Food Programme is funded entirely through voluntary donations - no country (or person) is required to support the organizations efforts.

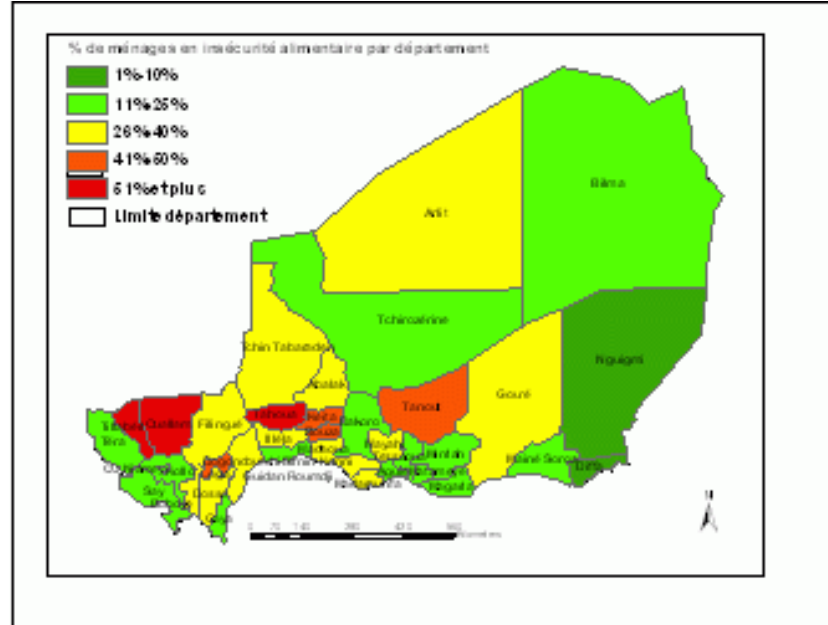
In terms of our first topic, the Sahelian region of Africa has experienced such food insecurity that thousands of agro-pastoral households have left their farms for life in urban areas - where they are exposed to the dangers of city life, unemployment, homelessness, the loss of a traditional means for sustenance, and death⁴. Additionally, most agro-pastoral families in the Eastern Sahel and Niger have a primary focus on rice, an important commodity that has been reduced in availability due to unfavorable weather conditions. Specifically for the Eastern Sahel, Millet is the most common food resource for insecure populations in rural and urban poor areas.

²<http://www.unaids.org/en/aboutunaids/unaidscosponsors/wfp/>

³<http://www.wfp.org/our-work>

⁴http://www.fews.net/docs/Publications/West_FSU_2010_02_en.pdf

Populations Affected: According to USAID one in three people living in Niger have malnutrition. Generally, the populations most affected live in agro-pastures in the North, poverty stricken cities (like Ouallam, Loga, and Tanout), or agricultural areas prone to deficit and controversial political campaigns. Despite the fact that areas most affected by malnutrition are generally agricultural zones, the food output varies year to year based on rainfall, displacement, natural resource exploitation, poor sanitation, and a reduced labour force due to enforced slavery.⁵ Furthermore, Niger has 9 states with 39% or more of the population struggling with malnutrition. The types of people most affected are young children (from 0 to 59 months), women, orphans, the landless, and those dependant on unstable jobs i.e. farmers and artisans.



Causes for the Eastern Sahel & Niger’s malnutrition rates are:

Land Based:

- 1) a history of severe droughts, the most recent (until 2011) being in 1991, that have completely destroyed the region’s means for productive agricultural and pastoral capital.
- 2) a lack of the productive means necessary to process a harvest, especially when it is plentiful.
- 3) the inability for many agricultural and pastoral households to be able to pay the high costs of equipment maintenance.

Socio-economic:

- 1) Traditionally, agricultural households will pass down land parcels based on successive heritages. Thus, from generation to generation, there is less land to be worked and used to produce a substantial output. This loss of land is amplified if the father or entire family is struck with disease - causing the family to sell the land for money and move to a poverty stricken city⁶.
- 2) The region’s weak capacity to purchase food leading to unvaried nutrition and a dependence on few types of crops.

Political:

- 1) The government’s inability to adjust inflation rates and incomes places a burden on families seeking health care, education, clothing, and other basic needs.

⁵<http://www.fews.net/ml/en/info/Pages/fmwkfactors.aspx?gb=ne&l=en&fmwk=pop>

⁶<http://www.fews.net/ml/en/info/Pages/fmwkfactors.aspx?gb=ne&l=en&fmwk=factor>

UN Involvement:

When debating how best to solve the immense problems of malnutrition in Africa it is important to note resolutions and programmes that have already gone into effect. First and foremost is the current international system used for analyzing food security - the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Reference Table for Household Groups. This table can be accessed at this link: <http://www.fews.net/ml/en/info/pages/scale.aspx> and, while the system has been adopted by several United Nations committees (including the World Food Programme) it is not perfect. In fact, IPC version 2 is due out soon, but at the time of my writing this is not yet available.

Beginning in 2005 the World Food Programme made some improvements to the area's food crisis though the area "remains one of the poorest and most food insecure in the world⁷." The 2005 efforts led to a food security and vulnerability survey which indicated that 30% of Nigerian households remain food insecure, with 9.3% of households remaining severely food insecure.

Under resolution PRRO 10509.0 the World Food Programme has pledged to work towards the Millennium Development Goals of 1. Eradicating extreme hunger and poverty, 2. Reducing child mortality, 3. Improving maternal health, 4. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, and 5. Ensuring environmental stability⁸. The World Food Programme has passed Project Number 10614.0 focusing on improving childhood education and strengthening the mitigation of food insecurity in the event of poor harvests/drought⁹ and Project Number 107340 focusing on improving the security situation of Niger in order to provide safe commercial transport services and deliveries. However, since the resolutions passing in 2008 the security situation has only continued to deteriorate¹⁰ and hurt food insecure families access to outside crops.

Current Situation/Potential for Future Action:

Despite the noticeable efforts of the United Nations to improve the nutritional status of the Eastern Sahel and Niger, many resolutions have had their timelines extended¹¹ due to lack of area improvement. Reasons for the continued prevalence of acute malnutrition can be attributed to poor structuring of programs designed to combat food insecurity, depleted household assets, drought, and - most notably - poor levels of nutrition in the first 1000 days of life.

⁷<http://www.wfp.org/countries/Niger/Operations/Current-Operations>

⁸<http://www.wfp.org/countries/Niger/Operations/Current-Operations>

⁹<http://www.wfp.org/countries/Niger/Operations/Country-Programme-Niger-10614-0--2009-2013->

¹⁰<http://www.wfp.org/countries/Niger/Operations/Provision-of-Safe--Efficient-and-Sufficient-Air-Transport-Services-to-the-Humanitarian-Community-in-N>

¹¹<http://www.wfp.org/countries/Niger/Operations/PROTRACTED-RELIEF-AND--RECOVERY-OPERATIONS---NIGER-200051>

While many programs have been failing due to ineffective organization and implementation the most recent drought in Africa has had an immense impact on all past efforts by the WFP and left several previously self-sustaining families destitute.¹² The current crisis has caused the WFP to declare a corporate emergency, elevating the crisis to the highest level of action,¹³ and deliver via air and road meals to 92,000 people per day all of which are expected to cost \$767 million. \$250 million of this figure remains unfunded.

The current drought has almost entirely changed the focus of action in the entire Eastern Sahel/Niger region. While past programs may have helped, the land has been altered, families have moved, education/health-care/safety have been put on a back burner in order for the WFP to focus on providing immediate support¹⁴ (food). Due to this crisis a focused resolution to benefit the region is required as is a revamping of the programmes already in place.

Questions to Consider:

1. Much of the WFP's implementation difficulties have been due to insufficient funding. Think **creatively** as to how this could be solved.
2. How willing and able is your country to give aid? If you are not directly involved in the issue how might your country contribute to relief efforts?
3. How can the logistics of food delivery and agricultural development be improved and made more safe? Why haven't past solutions worked?
4. Taking the current large-scale food crisis into account, what must be done to incorporate past resolutions into a comprehensive solution for the families, children, and government of Niger/the Eastern Sahel?
5. What methods can be taken to enable the region to eventually become self-sustaining?

Additional Research Sources:

- World Factbook
 - <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

¹²<http://www.wfp.org/stories/once-farmers-who-grew-their-own-crops-now-destitute-mogadishu>

¹³<http://www.wfp.org/crisis/horn-of-africa>

¹⁴<http://www.wfp.org/crisis/horn-of-africa>

- World Food Programme (Niger and News)
 - <http://www.wfp.org/countries/niger>
 - <http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/wfp-warns-growing-challenges-drought-stricken-sahel-enters-hunger-season>
- Recent News Articles
 - Check NYT.com, The Gaurdian, The Economist, etc.
- Embassy World
 - <http://www.embassyworld.com/>
- Rand Corporation
 - <http://www.rand.org/>

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3. http://www.fews.net/docs/Publications/West_FSU_2010_02_en.pdf
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7. <http://www.wfp.org/countries/Niger/Operations/Current-Operations>
8. <http://www.wfp.org/crisis/horn-of-africa>
9. <http://www.wfp.org/content/food-crisis-looms-around-eastern-sahel-africa-wfp>

Topic 2: Rising Food Prices: Preventing and Managing Natural and Social Disasters' Effects on Global Food and Distribution Costs

Dear Delegates,

I wish you all greetings and a warm welcome to SIMUN X! We hope that this year's conference will be our best SIMUN thus far, and considering the spirited debate that I know will transpire in the World Food Programme, I fully expect it our hopes to be fulfilled. Our esteemed Chair, Alexa Daugherty, Class of 2012, will be presiding over our committee and I, Tom Boyle, Class of 2013, am honored to be your Vice-Chair this November.

Our second topic, focusing on unstable global food prices amidst our changing world filled with natural, social, and political events that affect the affordability of food on an international level, especially in the last several years. This rollercoaster is magnified throughout the world, whether the countries are developed or just developing. Thus, delegates must be sure to comprehend the situations of their individual country, as well as the international situation outlined in this background guide. Therefore, delegates must also be sure of their country's official position on this topic, and be able to defend it in debate. Ideally, the World Food Programme at SIMUN X will be able to take affirmative, lasting actions to put a stop to rising food prices, and combat the damage that has already arisen.

If you have any questions, concerns, or anything you wish to speak about with regards to this topic or the Conference, please send refer to the contact information located at the beginning of this guide.

Good luck and until SIMUN,

Tom Boyle

Brief Overview/Introduction/History:

The World Food Programme's Mission Statement begins with, "WFP is the food aid arm of the United Nations system. Food aid is one of the many instruments that can help to promote food security, which is defined as access of all people at all times to the food needed for an active and healthy life." The Mission Statement continues to state that its chief goal is to provide food for homes who do not produce enough food or do not have the resources to obtain enough food, permanently and during crisis#. Because of increased food prices, more and more people are falling into the latter category of not having the resources to purchase food at its inflated prices. Therefore, it is the task of the WFP to remedy the causes of rising food prices so that a larger amount of people can buy food without sacrificing other necessities of life.

As previously stated, our second topic not only deals with preventing the cost of food from rising, but also to make sure this does not happen in vulnerable times of natural, political, or economic unrest. When natural events such as floods or droughts devastate large amounts of crops, simple economics rules that the price of the commodity that was destroyed goes up. When governments collapse, weaken, or impose regulations on food, prices of food generally increase in the unstable periods that follow. When major changes in a global or regional economy occur, food prices also increase. Moreover, the loftiness of global food prices is a combination of several of the aforementioned circumstances. However, some regions of the world are affected more than others, in particular, those regions closest to their respective natural, political, or economic episodes. Obviously, food price increases are not good for food consumers, especially those who had already been struggling before the increase occurred. To further see the connection between world events and food prices, see the WFP's infographic found at: <http://www.wfp.org/stories/rising-food-prices-infographic>.

Populations Affected: Most of the population of the world is affected in some way by rising food prices, marginalized areas and areas hit by natural and economic disasters can bare the brunt of the damage. Geographically, the Horn of Africa is one of the most hard hit places

because of the existing famine, and resultant rising food prices. In several cities in East Africa, the price of corn, a staple food of the area, has climbed over 100% since last year#. In addition to Africa, the Arab World, especially during its widespread protesting and unrest earlier this year, has seen huge spikes in food prices. Perhaps it was no coincidence that the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia came just as food prices were at record highs#. Even in more developed areas like the Americas, more than 16% of people have gone hungry because of the rising costs of food since 2006 demonstrating how even people in the world's largest economy, the United States, have begun to feel the chilling effects of rising food prices. In a recent survey, one in four Americans was "worried about having enough money to put food on the table next year#." For a more global perspective, the World Bank announced earlier this year that 44 million more people have plunged into extreme poverty because of the rising cost of food#.

Causes for the rise in food prices can generally fall into three (3) categories:

Natural:

1) Increased inclement weather in agricultural areas, including widespread floods and droughts in some regions. This does not allow for as many crops to be produced as needed, and while the supply dwindles, mankind's need for sustenance keeps the demand high. So, prices skyrocket. This is perhaps the largest cause of food shortages, and therefore, higher prices.

Socio-economic:

1) Economic downturns and recessions, most recently, the one that began in 2008. These sorts of economic crises often lead to changes in food prices. Since 2008, the economy has suffered immense spikes and drop-offs#; such economic instability is unhealthy for the food markets of the world and can cause dramatic (read: costly) jumps in food prices.

2) Increased per capita food consumption in emerging markets with large populations, such as India and China. This puts strain on the supply of food, and drives prices up#.

3) Commodity investors who have held long positions in agricultural commodity markets in hopes of making profits on rising prices. Hedge funds typically invest 20-30% of their portfolios in commodities. As the funds never take delivery or see the actual agricultural product, their investments artificially stimulate price movement # .

Political:

1) Countries who have imposed export bans on foodstuffs have seriously hurt the bettering of rising food prices. Russia, for example, placed an export ban on wheat in 2010, which further raised the global price of wheat, as Russia is one of the world's largest suppliers of wheat#.

2) Political unrest in some countries, especially in the Arab World, were not only partly attributed to rising food prices#, but indirectly contributed to the problem through rising oil, food, and transportation costs#.

UN Involvement:

Before we can begin to come up with viable solutions to this topic, we must first look back to see what the WFP and other United Nations committees have done in attempts to stabilize the price of food and fix the greater problems of the global food crisis. In July of 2008, several UN committees, including the WFP, established the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, which tried to solve the global problems dealing with food at that time. The 2008 task force also outlined a plan to combat rising food prices in Section 1.4 and 1.5 of its Comprehensive Framework for Action. In more basic terms, it aimed to hold down core inflation of food by urging central banks and monetary authorities to hold down inflation so food prices would cease to rise. In addition, the CFA also called to make sure that global food import levels were met through external support and other means so that food prices would go down/stabilize#. You can read the full CFA and Section 1.4 and 1.5 beginning on page 14 here: <http://www.un.org/issues/food/taskforce/Documentation/CFA%20Web.pdf>

While global food prices began to drop dramatically after the Task Force was enacted, they stayed at somewhat normal levels for about a year, and since 2010, have been on the rise. In early 2011, they exceeded 2008 price levels. It is now the time to implement eternal, lasting action to fight the rise of food prices, rather than a somewhat weak, temporary fix as was passed in July of 2008.

Current Situation/Potential for Future Action:

At the time of writing, the prospects of lowering global food prices are grim. No major official action has been taken by the UN since the failure High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis in July of 2008. Perhaps the menus of actions were not completely implemented, or they simply were not effective enough to fight off the highest food prices in history. Many critics have demanded some sort of action from the United Nations to bring down soaring food prices, even the WFP itself. Despite the demand for change, the UN has been sluggish to respond. Still, millions more continue to dig themselves into poverty because of the high prices of food#.

However, there is hope. The WFP has the duty to protect the hungry people of the world from further inflation of food prices. The committee must find a lasting solution to the issue of rising food prices, unlike the poorly constructed quick fix from the 2008 Task Force. Such a solution should also seek to amend the causes that brought food prices to where they are today, from natural and social disasters to poorly thought out policies of governments and intergovernmental organizations that brought us the sky high food prices we see today. It is up to the WFP to step up to the plate and create an effective resolution that fully solves the issue at hand.

Questions to Consider:

1. What can the WFP do, using its strengths as a food aid deliverer, to help remedy this problem in the field in areas where people can no longer afford food?
2. What solutions would your **country** be interested in implementing? Something strict and authoritative, or more open and libertarian?
3. If funding is necessary for a well developed solution, how and from where can it be obtained?
4. What improvements to past solutions for food price inflation would be useful here? Would successful past solutions still apply to this issue?
5. Keeping efficiency in mind, what would be some strong solutions to tackle the causes of rising food prices? What about causes like floods and droughts that can't be fixed so easily?

Additional Research Sources:

- World Factbook
 - <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>
- World Food Programme
 - <http://www.wfp.org/>
 - <http://www.wfp.org/stories/rising-food-prices-10-questions-answered>
- Recent News Articles
 - <http://www.ft.com/foodprices>
 - NYT.com, The Economist, Huffington Post, etc.
- Embassy World
 - <http://www.embassyworld.com/>

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7. <http://www.thenewamerican.com/economy/commentary-mainmenu-43/6704-the-causes-of->

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8. <http://blogs.reuters.com/global/2010/08/12/can-export-bans-be-challenged-at-the-wto/>

9. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-03-23/rising-food-prices-threaten-democracy-cause-conflict-imf-says.html>

10. <http://adask.wordpress.com/2011/03/11/the-political-unrestoil-pricefood-price-spiral/>

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