

HMDC Presents... UNICEF: Quick Guide

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UNICEF, Harvard MUN Online, December 5-6, 2026: Childhood Hunger: Food Waste, Food Recovery, and Farmland Restoration

WHAT WE ARE DEBATING

Many children do not get enough safe, healthy food. At the same time, almost one fifth of the world's food is thrown away, and more is lost before it reaches a shop. Damaged soil also makes harvests smaller where hunger is worst. Our committee must decide how saved food and repaired land can reach hungry children.

WHAT OUR CHAIRS WILL FOCUS ON

In October, the committee studied the history of child hunger. In December, our chairs want three new pieces: wasted food, food that can be saved and given away, and farmland that needs repair. They want lasting solutions that connect all three pieces to children. School meals and war-zone hunger are background, so we tie them back to one of the three pieces.

FIVE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

1. **1.05 billion tonnes:** The world wasted this much food in 2022, and households caused 60% of it. (United Nations Environment Programme, March 27, 2024)
2. **13.3%:** This share of food was lost between harvest and shops in 2023, more than in 2015. (United Nations Statistics Division, July 7, 2026)
3. **526 million tonnes:** This much food is lost because there is no refrigeration to keep it cool. (United Nations Environment Programme, November 12, 2022)
4. **2.1 billion meals:** Food banks in one global network gave out this many meals in 2024. (Global FoodBanking Network, July 9, 2025)
5. **47 million children:** Damaged farmland is linked to this many stunted children, which means children too short for their age. (Food and Agriculture Organization, November 3, 2025)

WHAT THE UN HAS ALREADY DONE

1. **A/RES/70/1 (2015):** The General Assembly set the Sustainable Development Goals, including a target to halve food waste by 2030.
2. **UNEP/EA.4/Res.2 (2019):** The UN Environment Assembly asked countries to measure food waste and to stop waste first, then save and share leftover food.
3. **A/RES/73/284 (2019):** The General Assembly declared 2021-2030 the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, which includes farmland.
4. **A/RES/74/209 (2019):** The General Assembly created a day every September 29 to teach people about food waste.

5. **A/RES/79/171 (2024):** The General Assembly said again that everyone has a right to food, especially for children.

THE MAIN SOLUTIONS

1. **Cutting food loss on farms:** We keep food from rotting with cold storage, better storage bags and farmer training.
 - Help: Simple training cut tomato losses by 38% in the Philippines.
 - Harm: Refrigeration uses energy and gases that warm the planet.
2. **Saving extra food:** We collect safe, unsold food and give it to families through food banks.
 - Help: It uses food that already exists and keeps it out of landfills.
 - Harm: Charity can hide the real causes of hunger, which are low incomes and high prices.
3. **Changing donation laws:** We help countries fix rules that make throwing food away cheaper than giving it away.
 - Help: Clear date labels and protection for honest donors cost very little.
 - Harm: One model law may not fit every country's legal system.
4. **Repairing damaged farmland:** We repair soil with trees, better grazing and water collection.
 - Help: Repaired land gives larger harvests and holds up better in dry years.
 - Harm: Results take years, and fighting makes repair very hard.

WHERE THE MAIN GROUPS STAND

1. **European Union:** The EU gives a lot of money for healthy food and has food waste goals at home that its laws require.
2. **China:** China sees cutting food waste as a way to keep enough food for everyone and plans to cut waste in school canteens by 2027.
3. **African Union:** African countries put school meals and African-led farming plans first.
4. **Group of 77 and China:** These developing countries say hunger cannot end without more aid and fairer trade.
5. **United States:** The United States cut its emergency aid sharply in 2025.

KEY WORDS IN OUR TOPIC

1. **food loss:** When we say food loss, we mean food that spoils before it reaches a shop.
2. **food waste:** When we say food waste, we mean food that people throw away even though it could be eaten.
3. **food recovery:** When we say food recovery, we mean giving safe, unsold food to people who need it.
4. **cold chain:** When we say cold chain, we mean keeping food cold from the farm to the buyer.
5. **stunting:** When we say stunting, we mean a child is too short for their age because they ate poorly for a long time.
6. **land degradation:** When we say land degradation, we mean damaged land that grows less food.
7. **agroforestry:** When we say agroforestry, we mean growing trees and crops together, which protects the soil.
8. **rebound effect:** When we say rebound effect, we mean cheaper food makes people buy more, so part of the savings disappears.

QUESTIONS WE CAN ASK IN DEBATE

1. How does our plan make sure saved food reaches children first?
2. Most food waste happens inside homes, so how can a UN resolution change what families do?
3. Should recovered food have to be healthy food, and who would check this?
4. Farmland repair takes years, but children are hungry today, so how should we divide the money?

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