

HMDC Presents... UNICEF: Part 2 (The United Nations)

HMDC Presents... UNICEF: Childhood Hunger: Food Waste, Food Recovery, and Farmland Restoration (Research Report, December 2026)

Committee: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Harvard Model United Nations Online, December 5-6, 2026

WHAT OUR CHAIRS WILL FOCUS ON

Harvard tells us that this committee is about children who do not get enough safe, healthy food to eat. The October session looked back at the history of the problem and at what UNICEF has already tried. In December, we move on to three new pieces: food that is wasted, food that can be saved and given to people who need it, and farmland that needs to be repaired. Our job as delegates is to build "comprehensive and sustainable solutions" that connect these three pieces to hungry children.

Harvard Model United Nations, HMUN Online Committee Page, Last Accessed: October 2026

<https://www.harvardmun.org/unicef-online>

The parts of this report that match the December focus most closely are Part 1B (cutting food loss), Part 1C (recovering surplus food), Part 1E (restoring farmland), Part 3A (food waste networks) and Part 3C (farmland restoration programs).

How we use this report: This report also spends real space on school meals (Part 1D and Part 3B), emergency therapeutic food for severe wasting (Part 3D), and hunger in war zones (Part 2, entries 2.14 and 2.15). Harvard's December focus does not name any of these, so we treat them as background that explains why children are hungry, not as the centre of our speeches. We put food waste, food recovery and farmland restoration first in our position papers and resolutions. When we do mention school meals or therapeutic food, we tie them back to one of the three December pieces, for example by serving saved food or locally grown food in school meals.

PART 2, THE UNITED NATIONS RECORD

The UN has addressed this topic through four tracks: setting goals (the Sustainable Development Goals), declaring decades and international days to focus attention, condemning the use of hunger as a weapon in war, and running programs through its agencies (UNICEF, WFP, FAO, UNEP, UNCCD, IFAD). The record shows real progress on stunting and on hunger since 2022, but weak progress on food loss and waste, and a serious funding crisis since 2025.

2A. Table of UN Resolutions and Major UN Instruments

Every symbol below was confirmed on an official UN website (digitallibrary.un.org, un.org, press.un.org or unep.org) during research for this report.

Symbol	Year	Body	What it does (plain sentence)
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A/RES/44/25	1989	General Assembly	Adopts the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes every child's right to health and nutritious food (the treaty UNICEF is built around).
A/RES/70/1	2015	General Assembly	Adopts the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), Target 12.3 (halve food waste and reduce food loss by 2030) and Target 15.3 (restore degraded land).
A/RES/70/259	2016	General Assembly	Declares the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025) to push governments to end all forms of malnutrition.
A/RES/72/239	2017	General Assembly	Declares the UN Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028) to support small farmers, who grow much of the world's food.
S/RES/2417	2018	Security Council	Condemns the starvation of civilians as a method of war and asks the Secretary-General to warn the Council when conflict creates a risk of famine.
A/RES/73/284	2019	General Assembly	Declares the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) to prevent, halt and reverse damage to ecosystems, including farmland.
UNEP/EA.4/Res.2	2019	UN Environment Assembly	Asks countries to measure and reduce food loss and waste at every stage, improve cold chains, and follow a priority order of prevention first, then recovery and redistribution.
A/RES/74/209	2019	General Assembly	Creates the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, held every September 29.
S/RES/2573	2021	Security Council	Demands that warring parties stop attacking objects civilians need to survive, such as food and water systems, and condemns starvation as a war tactic.
A/RES/77/161	2022	General Assembly	Promotes zero-waste initiatives to advance the 2030 Agenda and creates the International Day of Zero

			Waste (March 30), which covers food waste among other kinds of waste.
A/RES/77/285	2023	General Assembly	Reviews and pushes forward the implementation of the Decade of Action on Nutrition (adopted without a vote on May 16, 2023).
A/HRC/RES/55/4	2024	Human Rights Council	Reaffirms the human right to food and asks states to protect it (adopted April 3, 2024).
A/RES/79/171	2024	General Assembly	Reaffirms the right to food and calls on states to address hunger and malnutrition, especially among children (adopted December 17, 2024).
A/RES/79/227	2024	General Assembly	The annual resolution on agriculture development, food security and nutrition, which guides UN work on food systems (adopted without a vote on December 19, 2024).

Note on symbols: the food waste resolution of the fourth UN Environment Assembly (March 2019) is confirmed on UNEP's official proceedings page as UNEP/EA.4/Res.2, "Promoting sustainable practices and innovative solutions for curbing food loss and waste." Exact adoption days confirmed on UN pages: A/RES/73/284 on March 1, 2019; S/RES/2573 on April 27, 2021; A/RES/77/161 on December 14, 2022; A/RES/77/285 on May 16, 2023.

2B. Evidence on What Is Working and What Is Not

2.1 United Nations Statistics Division, Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026 (Goal 2), July 7, 2026

Tagline: Assessing Zero Hunger progress Source: According to... United Nations Statistics Division, Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026, July 7, 2026 Link: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2026/goal-02> Fact: It states... hunger fell to 7.8% of the world (645 million people) in 2025, down from 8.6% in 2022. About 2.1 billion people faced moderate or severe food insecurity, 86 million fewer than in 2024 but 527 million more than in 2015. Child stunting fell from 26.4% in 2012 to 23.2% in 2024 (30.2 million fewer children), and wasting fell from 7.4% to 6.6% (8.1 million fewer children). Progress is slower in sub-Saharan Africa, and overall progress is too slow to reach Zero Hunger by 2030. This means... UN efforts on child nutrition are working, but not fast enough. Delegates can praise past progress while arguing that new tools, such as food recovery and restoration, are needed to speed it up.

2.2 United Nations Statistics Division, Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026 (Goal 12), July 7, 2026

Tagline: Revealing stalled food loss progress Source: According to... United Nations Statistics Division, Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026, July 7, 2026 Link: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2026/goal-12> Fact: It states... 13.3% of food was lost between harvest and retail in 2023, slightly more than the 13.0% lost in 2015. Food waste was 1.05 billion tonnes in 2022, or 19% of food available. The UN says progress on food loss "has been stagnant" and progress on food waste is "falling short." This means... SDG Target 12.3 (halving food waste by 2030) is failing. This is the clearest evidence that the current UN approach on food waste is not working and that this committee needs new ideas.

2.3 UNICEF, October 14, 2024

Tagline: Warning of therapeutic food shortages Source: According to... UNICEF, October 14, 2024 Link: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/nearly-two-million-severely-malnourished-children-risk-death-due-funding-shortages> Fact: It states... nearly two million children with severe wasting in 12 countries risked missing treatment because of funding shortages for ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), a peanut-based paste that treats wasting in six to eight weeks. Mali, Nigeria, Niger and Chad faced or were close to running out. UNICEF appealed for US\$165 million. Since 2022, 5.6 million children received life-saving treatment under UNICEF's "No Time to Waste" plan. This means... UNICEF's own treatment programs work when funded, but supply breaks put children's lives at risk. Delegates may propose that savings from food waste reduction, or new pooled funds, protect RUTF supplies.

2.4 UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, July 28, 2025

Tagline: Reviewing national food system plans Source: According to... UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, July 28, 2025 Link: <https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/latest-updates/news/detail/launch-of-unfss-4-report--scaled-up-action-needed-to-transform-food-systems-by-2030/en> Fact: It states... at the second UN Food Systems Summit Stocktake in Addis Ababa, the Secretary-General reported that 128 countries had written national plans ("pathways") to change their food systems, 155 had named national coordinators, and 112 had sent progress reports in 2025. Some countries have written the right to food into their laws. However, financing problems remain and the UN called for faster action. Only 20 of the original 31 "Coalitions of Action" are still active. This means... most countries already have food system plans, so a UNICEF resolution can build on them rather than start from zero. Delegates can ask countries to add child nutrition and food waste targets to their existing pathways.

2.5 United Nations Press, May 24, 2018

Tagline: Condemning starvation as warfare Source: According to... United Nations Press, May 24, 2018 Link: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13354.doc.htm> Fact: It states... the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2417, condemning the starvation of civilians as a method of war and the blocking of humanitarian aid. It asks the Secretary-General to report quickly when conflict creates a risk of famine, and it says the Council may consider sanctions against those who block aid. This means... the UN has already declared that starving civilians is unacceptable. UNICEF cannot enforce Security Council resolutions, but delegates can call for stronger reporting on child hunger in conflict zones.

2.6 Council on Foreign Relations, April 13, 2026

Tagline: Exposing weak enforcement on starvation Source: According to... Council on Foreign Relations, April 13, 2026 Link: <https://www.cfr.org/articles/the-world-agreed-to-stop-using-food-as-a-weapon-it-hasnt> Fact: It states... parties to wars continue to violate Resolution 2417 with almost no punishment, because the resolution has no enforcement system and permanent members of the Security Council use their vetoes to protect allies. Examples include Sudan, where a UN food convoy to El Fasher never arrived in June 2025, and Gaza. Experts propose sanctions, independent monitoring, prosecutions, and possibly a new treaty banning the use of food as a weapon. This means... the UN record on conflict hunger is weak in practice. Delegates should know that UNICEF can document harm to children and raise alarms, but enforcement belongs to other bodies.

2.7 Council on Foreign Relations, December 23, 2025

Tagline: Charting the 2025 aid collapse Source: According to... Council on Foreign Relations, December 23, 2025 Link: <https://www.cfr.org/articles/great-aid-recession-2025s-humanitarian-crash-nine-charts> Fact: It states... government humanitarian funding peaked at about US\$30 billion in 2022 and then fell, returning to roughly 2016 levels. About 25 million fewer people received aid in 2025 even though need stayed about the same. In March 2025, WFP cut monthly food rations for Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, from US\$12.50 to US\$6 per person. The United States still provided nearly 40% of all humanitarian funding. This means... the funding crisis is the biggest obstacle facing UN hunger programs today. Any resolution that depends on new donor money must explain where that money will come from.

2.8 World Food Programme (WFP), October 21, 2025

Tagline: Warning of a breaking point Source: According to... World Food Programme (WFP), October 21, 2025 Link: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/lifeline-risk-food-assistance-breaking-point-global-brief> Fact: It states... WFP described "an unprecedented crisis in international funding" and published country briefs on Afghanistan, Haiti, refugees in Uganda, South Sudan and Niger, showing food assistance at a "breaking point." This means... the UN agency responsible for emergency food is warning that it cannot meet need. UNICEF delegates should consider how food recovery and local farming could reduce dependence on emergency aid.

2.9 UNEP Law and Environment Assistance Platform (LEAP), Last Accessed: October 2026

Tagline: Summarising the food waste resolution Source: According to... UNEP Law and Environment Assistance Platform (LEAP), Last Accessed: October 2026 Link: <https://leap.unep.org/en/content/unea-resolution/promoting-sustainable-practices-and-innovative-solutions-curbing-food-loss> Fact: It states... the 2019 UN Environment Assembly resolution on food loss and waste invites countries to tackle losses at every stage of the supply chain, share best practices on energy-efficient cold chains, set national strategies in line with SDG Target 12.3, and build systems to measure food loss and waste. It says actions should follow a priority order: prevention first, then food recovery and redistribution. It also warns against simply moving waste from one part of the supply chain to another. This means... there is already UN language on food waste that delegates can quote or build on. The "prevention first, then recovery" order is useful for clauses that rank solutions.

2.10 UN Digital Library, December 19, 2019

Tagline: Creating an awareness day Source: According to... UN Digital Library, December 19, 2019 Link: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3848136> Fact: It states... the General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/74/209, "International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste," without a vote on December 19, 2019. The day is now marked every September 29 by FAO and UNEP. This means... the UN has agreed by consensus that food waste deserves global attention. Delegates can cite this resolution as proof of broad agreement, and can point out that awareness days alone have not changed the numbers in entry 2.2.

2.11 UNICEF, August 20, 2025

Tagline: Counting children cut off from nutrition Source: According to... UNICEF, August 20, 2025 Link: <https://www.unicef.org/stories/cutting-childrens-lifelines> Fact: It states... UNICEF estimates that funding cuts could disrupt essential nutrition support for at least 14 million children. Since 2000, the number of stunted children under five has fallen by 55 million, but these gains are now at risk. A child with severe acute malnutrition is nine times more likely to die than a well-nourished child. In the five Darfur states of Sudan, the number of children treated for severe acute malnutrition rose by almost 50% from January to May 2025 compared with a year earlier, while 62% of UNICEF's funding needs in Sudan were unmet by the end of June 2025. This means... UNICEF's own record shows that decades of progress can be lost in a single year of aid cuts. Delegates can argue that protecting existing nutrition programs should come before launching new ones.

2.12 World Health Organization (WHO), March 26, 2025

Tagline: Extending the nutrition decade to 2030 Source: According to... World Health Organization (WHO), March 26, 2025 Link: [https://www.who.int/news/item/26-03-2025-united-nations-decade-of-action-on-nutrition-\(2016-2025\)-extended-to-2030](https://www.who.int/news/item/26-03-2025-united-nations-decade-of-action-on-nutrition-(2016-2025)-extended-to-2030) Fact: It states... on March 24, 2025, the General Assembly extended the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition so that it now runs to 2030, the same end date as the Sustainable Development Goals. 158 member states voted in favour, and 139 co-sponsored the resolution. It asks countries to scale up their national nutrition commitments and investment and to act in six areas, including food systems that support healthy diets, social protection and nutrition education, and stronger accountability. FAO and WHO will lead the Decade and report to the General Assembly every two years. A WHO official warned that the world is "off track to end hunger and malnutrition by 2030." This means... the UN's main nutrition framework now lasts until 2030, so a UNICEF resolution can tie its clauses to the extended Decade instead of building a new framework. The fact that a vote was held, rather than the usual agreement without a vote, shows that even nutrition has become politically divided (see section 2C).

2.13 UNICEF, August 22, 2025

Tagline: Confirming famine in Gaza Source: According to... UNICEF, August 22, 2025 Link: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/famine-confirmed-first-time-gaza> Fact: It states... an analysis by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), the system the UN and its partners use to measure hunger, confirmed famine in Gaza Governorate, the first confirmed famine in the Middle East. More than half a million people were trapped in famine. In July 2025 alone, more than 12,000 children were found to be acutely malnourished, the highest monthly number recorded, and nearly one in four had the most severe form. The number of children expected to be at risk of death from malnutrition by June 2026 rose from 14,100 to 43,400. The heads of FAO, UNICEF, WFP and WHO together called for a ceasefire and full humanitarian access. This means... famine was confirmed seven years after Security Council resolution 2417 condemned starvation as a weapon, which shows the limits described in entry 2.6. Delegates can argue that UNICEF's strongest tool in conflict is fast, public data on child malnutrition, which raises pressure for access.

2.14 Security Council Report, August 3, 2026

Tagline: Previewing the Council's hunger debate Source: According to... Security Council Report, August 3, 2026 Link: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2026-08/conflict-and-food-insecurity-3.php> Fact: It states... Denmark used its August 2026 presidency of the Security Council to hold a high-level open debate on conflict and food insecurity. In 2025, more than 147 million people in 19 countries and territories faced acute hunger caused by conflict. The June 2026 Hunger Hotspots report named six places of highest concern: Nigeria, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen. Sudan's 2026 humanitarian plan was only 40.3% funded. WFP estimates that disruption in the Strait of Hormuz could push up to 45 million more people into hunger if oil prices stay high. Denmark and Bahrain began monthly expert meetings in 2026 on the hunger hotspots that are on the Council's agenda. This means... the Security Council now treats hunger as a peace and security issue, and new risks, such as high oil prices, can raise food prices far from any war. Delegates can propose that UNICEF's child nutrition data be shared directly with these hotspot meetings.

2.15 Government of Iceland (Joint Nordic Statement), August 25, 2026

Tagline: Calling for stronger enforcement of 2417 Source: According to... Government of Iceland, August 25, 2026 Link: <https://www.stjornarradid.is/frettir/grein/joint-nordic-statement-food-under-fire-the-security-councils-role-in-mitigating-global-and-local-food-crises/> Fact: It states... at the Security Council's open debate "Food Under Fire" on August 25, 2026, Iceland spoke for Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The Nordic countries called resolution 2417 "a solid basis" that needs "stronger operationalization." They proposed that the Council consider restrictive measures, such as sanctions, use early-warning reports with clear deadlines for action, and make sure people who break the rules are held accountable. They also asked for predictable, flexible funding and said that in conflict zones a school meal may be a child's only meal of the day. This means... a group of major donors wants resolution 2417 to carry real consequences. Delegates whose countries worry about sanctions may resist this idea, while supporters can quote the Nordic point about school meals as proof that feeding children belongs in conflict planning.

2C. Where the Major Blocs Stand

Countries and groups of countries do not all see this topic the same way. Some focus on money and fairness between rich and poor countries, some on conflict and enforcement, and some on laws at home. Check your own country's latest speeches and votes, because positions can change quickly.

1. **United States:** The United States was once a leading voice linking war and hunger, but it has become less vocal at the Security Council and has disputed famine findings in Gaza. It also cut its humanitarian aid sharply in 2025 (see entries 1.10e and 2.7). Source: According to... Security Council Report, August 3, 2026 Link: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2026-08/conflict-and-food-insecurity-3.php>
2. **Russia:** Russia questions whether the Security Council is the right place to debate hunger and argues that Western sanctions and aid cuts make hunger worse. Source: According to... Security Council Report, August 3, 2026 Link: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2026-08/conflict-and-food-insecurity-3.php>
3. **China:** China treats cutting food loss and waste as a matter of national food security; its national plan aims to bring grain losses below international averages and to cut waste in school and government canteens by the end of 2027. At the Security Council it generally prefers that food issues stay with the General Assembly and specialised agencies (see entry 2.14). Source: According to... Government of China (Xinhua), November 25, 2024 Link: https://english.www.gov.cn/policies/latestreleases/202411/25/content_WS6744812dc6d0868f4e8ed6a0.html
4. **European Union:** The EU is one of the largest nutrition donors (entry 3.6) and has passed binding food waste targets at home (entry 3.3a). At the UN it regretted that a vote was forced on a nutrition resolution, saying that "geopolitical concerns are taking precedence over feeding the most vulnerable," and it wanted stronger language on women, girls and the link between conflict and hunger. Source: According to... Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, March 25, 2025 Link: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un-new-york/eu-explanation-vote-%E2%80%93-un-general-assembly-resolution-agriculture-development-food-security-and_en
5. **African Union:** The African Union treats school meals and African-led farming plans as continental priorities. 44 African countries have joined the School Meals Coalition, more than 65.9 million African children receive daily school meals, and the African Union has asked to become a co-chair of the Coalition. Source: According to... African Union, November 1, 2024 Link: https://au.int/sites/default/files/pressreleases/44325-pr-School_Meals_Coalition_Second_Ministerial_Meeting_press_release-1.pdf
6. **Group of 77 and China:** The largest group of developing countries at the UN says hunger cannot end without more money and fairer trade. It warned that aid fell 7.1% in real terms from 2023, asked donor countries to keep their aid promises, and called for rejecting protectionist trade measures that hurt development. Source: According to... Group of 77 and China, October 15, 2025 Link: <https://www.g77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=251015>