

HMDC Presents... UNICEF: Part 3 (International Efforts)

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 3, INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS

Outside the UN system, many international organizations, partnerships and programs work on the three parts of this topic. Some are networks of governments, some are charities or foundations, and some are coalitions of businesses. Delegates can propose that UNICEF partner with, fund or learn from these efforts.

3A. Food Waste and Food Loss Networks

3.1 Champions 12.3, 2024 Progress Report, Last Accessed: October 2026

Tagline: Tracking the halving target Source: According to... Champions 12.3, Last Accessed: October 2026 Link: <https://champions123.org/2024-progress-report> Fact: It states... Champions 12.3, a coalition of leaders from government, business, research and civil society, says in its 2024 progress report that SDG Target 12.3 is "fast becoming out of reach." It calls on every government and company to find at least one food loss and waste "hotspot" and act on it now. It notes that halving food loss and waste could cut global greenhouse gas emissions by up to 5%. This means... the leading international coalition on this target admits the world is failing. Its "find a hotspot and act" approach is a practical model delegates can write into a resolution.

3.2 International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Last Accessed: October 2026

Tagline: Supporting small farmers against loss Source: According to... International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Last Accessed: October 2026 Link: <https://www.ifad.org/en/food-loss-reduction> Fact: It states... about 14% of the world's food is lost before it goes on sale, mainly because of poor storage, processing and transport. IFAD invests in cold storage, grain drying and airtight storage bags, rural roads and markets, and works with FAO and WFP on a shared community of experts on food loss. This means... IFAD is the UN-linked fund that pays for farm-level loss reduction. Delegates can propose joint UNICEF-IFAD projects that connect reduced losses on farms to better nutrition for children in the same communities.

3.3 Harvard Law School Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation, June 19, 2025

Tagline: Expanding the food donation atlas Source: According to... Harvard Law School Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation, June 19, 2025 Link: <https://chlpi.org/news-and-events/news-and-commentary/food-law-and-policy/new-reports-highlight-food-donation-policy-opportunities-in-poland-and-ireland/> Fact: It states... the Global Food Donation Policy Atlas, run by Harvard's Food Law and Policy Clinic with the Global FoodBanking Network, now has guides for more than 25 countries and the European Union. New 2025 reports on Poland and Ireland, written with the European Food Banks Federation, were the first on EU countries. In the EU, more than 42 million people cannot afford a quality meal every other day, while nearly 59 million tonnes of food are wasted each year. The reports recommend national waste targets, allowing donation of food past its "best before" date, legal protection for honest donors, and tax incentives. This means... the "model donation law" idea has grown from 15 countries to more than 25 in five years, so delegates can point to a working international tool rather than an untested proposal. A resolution can encourage every member state to request its own Atlas review.

3.3a European Parliament, September 9, 2025

Tagline: Setting binding food waste targets Source: According to... European Parliament, September 9, 2025 Link: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20250905IPR30172/parliament-adopts-new-eu-rules-to-reduce-textile-and-food-waste> Fact: It states... the European Parliament gave final approval to the first binding food waste targets for EU countries. By December 31, 2030, each country must cut food waste by 10% in food processing and manufacturing, and by 30% per person in shops, restaurants, food services and households, compared with the yearly average for 2021-2023. The EU wastes nearly 60 million tonnes of food a year, about 132 kg per person. Countries must also make sure that major food businesses help donate unsold food that is still safe to eat. Countries have 20 months after the law takes effect to write it into their own national law. This means... the EU has moved from voluntary promises to legal targets, the strongest regional action on SDG Target 12.3 so far. Delegates can propose that other regions follow this model, while delegates from poorer countries may argue that they need money and measuring systems before they can accept binding targets.

3.3b Government of China (Xinhua), November 25, 2024

Tagline: Planning China's waste reduction Source: According to... Government of China (Xinhua), November 25, 2024 Link:

https://english.www.gov.cn/policies/latestreleases/202411/25/content_WS6744812dc6d0868f4e8ed6a0.html

Fact: It states... China's central government issued an action plan to reduce food loss and waste. By the end of 2027, it aims to bring grain and food losses in production, storage, transport and processing below international average levels, and to cut food waste per meal significantly in restaurants and in government, school and company canteens. The plan also improves national statistics, standards and measures for food loss and waste, and raises public awareness of saving food. This means... one of the world's largest food producers treats waste reduction as a food security policy, not only an environmental one. Delegates can point to school canteens as a place where cutting waste and improving child nutrition happen at the same time.

3B. Child Nutrition and School Meals Alliances

3.4 Rockefeller Foundation, November 15, 2024

Tagline: Pledging to double school meals Source: According to... Rockefeller Foundation, November 15,

2024 Link: <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/news/governments-and-partners-pledge-to-double-school-meals-for-children-in-hardest-hit-countries-by-2030>

Fact: It states... at the G20 summit in Rio de Janeiro, governments and partners pledged to reach 150 million more children with school meals by 2030 in low- and lower-middle-income countries, more than doubling current coverage there. The effort is part of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, launched by Brazil's G20 presidency. The School Meals Coalition, which supports the goal, includes more than 100 governments and more than 130 partners. This means... there is already a large international commitment on school meals.

Delegates can argue that UNICEF should support this goal, and can link it to food recovery by asking schools to use locally grown or recovered nutritious food.

3.5 World Food Programme (WFP), Last Accessed: October 2026

Tagline: Reporting school meal growth Source: According to... World Food Programme (WFP), State of School Feeding Worldwide 2024, Last Accessed: October 2026 Link:

<https://publications.wfp.org/2024/state-of-school-feeding/> Fact: It states... at least 466 million children received school meals in 2024, an increase of almost 80 million over four years. Africa had the largest increase in the last two years, with 20 million more children reached. The School Meals Coalition aims to make healthy school meals available to every child by 2030. This means... school meal programs are growing fast, even in Africa, which shows countries are investing their own money. The challenge for delegates is keeping this growth going as foreign aid falls.

3.6 Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, April 1, 2025

Tagline: Mobilising nutrition funding in Paris Source: According to... Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)

Movement, April 1, 2025 Link: <https://scalingupnutrition.org/news/nutrition-growth-summit-mobilizes-over-us27-billion-reach-nutrition-related-sustainable>

Fact: It states... the Nutrition for Growth Summit in Paris (March 27-28, 2025) gathered 127 delegations, including 106 national governments, and raised about US\$27.55 billion in pledges and more than 400 commitments. Major pledges came from the African Development Bank (US\$9.5 billion), the European Union (€6.5 billion), the World Bank (US\$5 billion) and France (€750 million). This means... large sums have been promised for nutrition, but pledges are not the same as money spent. Delegates can call for transparent tracking of these pledges as part of a UNICEF resolution.

3.7 Center for Global Development, October 7, 2026

Tagline: Pricing school meals in emergencies Source: According to... Center for Global Development, October 7, 2026 Link: <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/school-meals-emergencies-what-they-cost-and-trade-offs-involved> Fact: It states... a study of 65 education grants from Education Cannot Wait and the Global Partnership for Education (2018-2024) found that school meals used about 31% of grant budgets but reached about 7% of the children served. The yearly cost per child ranged from US\$4 to more than US\$200, with a middle value of US\$35. Large programs cost far less per child: a UNICEF program in Zimbabwe fed over one million children for about US\$4 each, while a small program in the Central African Republic cost US\$168 per child. The authors note that government aid fell 23.1% between 2024 and 2025. This means... school meals in crisis zones work best at large scale and through shared buying systems. Delegates can argue that UNICEF should fund fewer, larger programs that buy food together, instead of many small ones, so that each dollar feeds more children.

3C. Farmland and Landscape Restoration Programs

3.8 UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), March 27, 2023

Tagline: Reviewing the Great Green Wall Source: According to... UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), March 27, 2023 Link: <https://www.unccd.int/index%2Ephp/news-stories/stories/progress-accelerated-targeted-action-needed-realize-africas-great-green-wall> Fact: It states... Africa's Great Green Wall aims to restore 100 million hectares of degraded land across the Sahel and create 10 million rural jobs by 2030. At the One Planet Summit in January 2021, donors pledged US\$19 billion, but only US\$2.5 billion had been paid out by early 2023, while about US\$33 billion is needed in total. Weak national agencies and political and security problems in the Sahel slow the work. This means... the biggest international farmland restoration project shows both promise and a large gap between promises and delivery. Delegates should treat restoration as necessary but slow, and should focus on follow-through.

3.9 World Resources Institute (WRI), November 24, 2020

Tagline: Mapping African restoration pledges Source: According to... World Resources Institute (WRI), November 24, 2020 Link: <https://www.wri.org/initiatives/african-forest-landscape-restoration-initiative-afr100> Fact: It states... the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) aims to restore 100 million hectares of deforested and degraded land in Africa by 2030. Thirty-three African countries have joined, and together they have pledged 129 million hectares, more than the original goal. This means... African governments themselves are leading restoration, which matters in debate about national ownership. Delegates can propose linking AFR100 restoration sites with UNICEF child nutrition programs in the same areas.

3.10 UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Last Accessed: October 2026

Tagline: Halving degraded land by 2040 Source: According to... UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Last Accessed: October 2026 Link: <https://www.unccd.int/our-work/flagship-initiatives/G20-Initiative> Fact: It states... the G20 Global Land Initiative, launched by G20 leaders in November 2020, aims to stop and reverse land degradation and to cut the world's degraded land in half by 2040. It is run by a coordination office under the UNCCD, with guidance from interested G20 members, FAO and UNEP. This means... the world's largest economies have made a shared promise on land restoration. Delegates from G20 countries can be asked to show what they have delivered, and delegates from other countries can ask for G20 support.

3.11 UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), July 9, 2026

Tagline: Funding drought resilience after Riyadh Source: According to... UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), July 9, 2026 Link: <https://www.unccd.int/index%2Ephp/news-stories/press-releases/saudi-arabia-and-unccd-accelerate-implementation-cop16-outcomes-ahead> Fact: It states... the Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership, created at the UNCCD's COP16 in Riyadh in December 2024, aims to help countries prepare for drought before it strikes rather than react after crops fail. Pledges include US\$1 billion from the Islamic Development Bank, US\$1 billion from the OPEC Fund, and up to US\$10 billion by 2030 from the Arab Coordination Group. Land degradation and drought cost more than US\$878 billion a year. Countries need about US\$355 billion a year to address them but invest only US\$77 billion, and private money makes up just 6% of current funding. This means... new money for farmland and drought exists, but it is far smaller than the need. Delegates can propose that part of these funds target farming areas with high child stunting, linking restoration money directly to child nutrition.

3.12 United Nations Regional Information Centre (UNRIC), August 31, 2026

Tagline: Restoring rangelands at COP17 Source: According to... United Nations Regional Information Centre (UNRIC), August 31, 2026 Link: <https://unric.org/en/unccd-cop17-advances-new-pathways-for-land-restoration-drought-resilience-and-implementation/> Fact: It states... the UNCCD's COP17, which ended in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on August 28, 2026, brought together all 197 Parties. Rangelands cover 54% of the Earth's land, support about two billion people, and are managed by roughly 500 million herders. The Rangelands Flagship Initiative, worth US\$1.2 billion across 45 projects, is the largest single funding effort for rangelands in the Convention's history. This means... restoration is not only about cropland; grazing land feeds the families of herders, whose children depend on milk and meat for nutrition. Delegates from herding regions (Central Asia, the Sahel, East Africa) can tie this new fund to child nutrition clauses.

3.12a International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), February 14, 2025

Tagline: Adopting Africa's ten-year food plan Source: According to... International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), February 14, 2025 Link: <https://www.ilri.org/news/au-endorses-10-year-plan-build-resilient-agrifood-systems-africa> Fact: It states... at an extraordinary summit in Kampala, Uganda, on January 9-11, 2025, the African Union approved the Kampala CAADP Declaration and a ten-year plan for 2026-2035. Its goals include raising Africa's food and farm output by 45% by 2035, mobilising US\$100 billion in investment, reaching zero hunger with better nutrition, and giving women and young people a larger role in farming. As of 2023, no African Union member was on track to meet the earlier Malabo Declaration targets, and few were spending 10% of their public budgets on agriculture as promised in Maputo in 2003. About 20% of Africans face hunger. This means... African governments have their own plan for food and farming through 2035, so a UNICEF resolution should support African-led plans instead of replacing them. The record of missed earlier targets gives delegates a reason to ask for clear yearly progress checks.

3D. Emergency Nutrition Supply Partnerships

When funding falls, the first thing children lose is often the therapeutic food that treats severe wasting. Partnerships between UNICEF and individual donors are now filling gaps country by country.

3.13 UNICEF Afghanistan, March 3, 2026

Tagline: Airlifting therapeutic food to Afghanistan Source: According to... UNICEF Afghanistan, March 3, 2026 Link: <https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/press-releases/european-union-and-unicef-airlift-life-saving-nutrition-supplies-afghanistan-amid> Fact: It states... the European Union and UNICEF began three flights to Kabul carrying 20,000 boxes of ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), enough to treat 20,000 children. About 3.7 million children under five in Afghanistan are acutely malnourished. The shortage was caused by few local suppliers, the closure of the border with Pakistan (a main supply route), and funding cuts from former major donors. This means... emergency airlifts can save children's lives, but they are expensive and cover only a small part of the need. Delegates can argue for producing RUTF closer to where it is needed and for keeping reserve stocks in each region, so supplies do not depend on one border or one donor.

3.13a UNICEF Supply Division, December 2025

Tagline: Producing therapeutic food near children Source: According to... UNICEF Supply Division, December 2025 Link: <https://www.unicef.org/supply/media/24596/file/RUTF-Market-and-Supply-Update-2025> Fact: It states... UNICEF now buys ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) from 23 manufacturers, 20 of them in countries with many malnourished children. About 61% of the RUTF UNICEF bought came from countries where it is needed, and locally made RUTF is priced competitively with imports. A carton cost on average about US\$46.70 in 2024. That year UNICEF delivered 86,500 tonnes, enough to treat about 6.2 million children, yet about 12.2 million children have severe wasting at any given time and half to two thirds of them go untreated. About 96% of the money for RUTF is short-term emergency funding, and factories could produce several times more than donors currently pay for. This means... the problem is not a lack of factories but a lack of steady money. Delegates can propose multi-year funding promises for RUTF, which would let local factories plan ahead, lower prices and keep supplies flowing during crises like the one in Afghanistan (entry 3.13).

3.13b NPR, April 25, 2025

Tagline: Explaining the life-saving peanut paste Source: According to... NPR, April 25, 2025 Link: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goats-and-soda/2025/04/25/g-s1-62165/malnutrition-children-plumpynut-lifesaving-u-s-aid> Fact: It states... Plumpy'Nut, the best-known brand of RUTF, is a peanut paste with added vitamins and minerals. Each packet costs roughly 30 cents to make, and a child usually eats two or three packets a day for six to eight weeks. Before these foods existed, only about 25% of severely malnourished children in treatment survived; with them, 80-90% survive. A UNICEF report warned in March 2025 that funding cuts could leave more than 2.4 million severely malnourished children without RUTF for the rest of 2025. In Nigeria, supplies sat in warehouses because there were no staff to hand them out. The US State Department said its support for RUTF continued. This means... RUTF is one of the lowest-cost, best-tested ways to save a child's life, so cutting it has an immediate human cost. Delegates can argue that therapeutic food should be protected first in any budget, and the Nigeria warehouses show that the workers who deliver food matter as much as the food itself.

3E. Proposed and Emerging Efforts (Brief List)

1. **A global financing coordination mechanism for school meals**, proposed by researchers at Brookings, would coordinate donors without creating a new fund (see entry 1.18).
2. **A new treaty banning the use of food as a weapon** has been proposed by some experts, though support from major powers is uncertain (see entry 2.6).
3. **Model food donation laws** based on the Global Food Donation Policy Atlas, which now covers more than 25 countries and the EU (see entries 1.15 and 3.3).
4. **Sustainable cold-chain partnerships** between UNEP, FAO and the private sector, using clean energy and low-warming refrigerants (see entry 1.11).

5. **UNICEF's Child Nutrition Fund**, which UNICEF has asked donors to support as part of its plan to fight child food poverty (see entry 1.4).
6. **Binding regional food waste targets** modelled on the EU's 2030 law, which other regions could adopt once they have measuring systems (see entry 3.3a).
7. **Multi-year funding promises for therapeutic food (RUTF)**, so that factories in high-need countries can plan ahead and keep prices down (see entries 3.13a and 3.13b).

KEY VOCABULARY

1. **Food loss:** Food that is lost after harvest and before it reaches shops, for example because it rots in storage or is damaged in transport.
 2. **Food waste:** Food that is thrown away by shops, restaurants, or households even though it could have been eaten.
 3. **Food recovery (redistribution):** Collecting safe, unsold food and giving it to people who need it, often through food banks.
 4. **Cold chain:** A system of refrigerated storage and transport that keeps food cool from the farm to the buyer.
 5. **Stunting:** When a child is too short for their age because of long-term poor nutrition; it can permanently harm brain development.
 6. **Wasting:** When a child is dangerously thin for their height because of sudden, severe lack of food or illness; it can be fatal without treatment.
 7. **Severe child food poverty:** UNICEF's term for a young child who eats from two or fewer of eight basic food groups each day.
 8. **Land degradation:** Damage to land that lowers its ability to grow plants and food, caused by things like erosion, overgrazing or loss of soil nutrients.
 9. **Agroforestry:** Growing trees together with crops or animals on the same land to protect soil and improve harvests.
 10. **Ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF):** An energy-rich paste, usually made with peanuts, used to treat children with severe wasting.
 11. **Rebound effect:** When saving resources makes something cheaper, so people use more of it, cancelling part of the savings.
 12. **SDG Target 12.3:** The UN goal to halve food waste per person and reduce food loss by 2030.
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. UNICEF is a children's agency. How can it act on food waste and farmland, which are usually handled by FAO, UNEP and UNCCD, without duplicating their work?
2. Most food waste happens in households (60%). Can international action change behaviour inside homes, or should UNICEF focus on farms, shops and schools?
3. Should food recovery programs be required to deliver nutritious food (fruit, vegetables, protein) rather than any surplus food? Who would set and check these standards?
4. Researchers warn that giving surplus food to charities can hide the real causes of hunger. How should a resolution balance food recovery with cash transfers and other social protection?
5. With humanitarian funding falling since 2022, where should money for school meals, therapeutic food and restoration come from? Should poorer countries pay more themselves, and is that fair?
6. Farmland restoration takes years to raise harvests, but children are hungry today. How should a resolution divide resources between emergency help and long-term restoration?
7. In conflict zones such as Sudan and Gaza, food often cannot reach children at all. What can UNICEF realistically do when Security Council resolutions like 2417 are not enforced?

8. Should countries be encouraged to change their laws (date labels, donor liability, tax rules) to increase food donation, and how can a UN resolution do this while respecting national sovereignty?

Research Gaps and Notes for the Coach

1. **Resolution table now fully confirmed:** Every symbol in the table, including the UNEA food waste resolution (UNEP/EA.4/Res.2), was confirmed on an official UN or UNEP page. A/RES/77/161 (zero waste) was added in October 2026.
2. **Undated organisation pages:** Five entries (2.9, 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.10) still use "Last Accessed: October 2026." Each page was opened again on October 14, 2026, and none shows a day, month and year of publication, so no real date could replace the access date. The two SDG Report 2026 entries (2.1, 2.2) carry the official launch date, July 7, 2026, confirmed by UN DESA. Entries 1.18a (July 2025) and 3.13a (December 2025) give month and year only because the sources show no day.
3. **Older sources kept on purpose:** Entry 1.16 (2017) and entry 1.20 (2021) are older than the 2022 preference. They were kept because they are the clearest academic sources on the limits of food redistribution and on restoration returns.
4. **News coverage improved but still partial:** Round three added a second Associated Press article (entry 1.10e, read through The Gazette's reprint) and NPR (entry 3.13b). No open Reuters, BBC or Guardian article on this exact topic combination could be opened; the Reuters stories found were available only as reprints on regional sites, so they were not used.
5. **COP17 detail:** The UNCCD's own COP17 decisions (August 2026) were not opened; entry 3.12 relies on the UN Regional Information Centre summary.
6. **Round three additions (October 14, 2026):** Thirteen new entries (1.10c, 1.10d, 1.10e, 1.18a, 2.12 to 2.15, 3.3a, 3.3b, 3.12a, 3.13a, 3.13b) and the new section 2C on bloc positions. The newest are the Global Report on Food Crises 2026 (April 2026), the Security Council Report preview (August 3, 2026) and the Nordic statement at the Security Council (August 25, 2026).
7. **Resolution symbol for the nutrition decade extension:** Entry 2.12 describes the March 2025 General Assembly resolution extending the Decade of Action on Nutrition to 2030. WHO's page gives the draft symbol A/79/L.66 and the date March 24, 2025; the final A/RES symbol and the full vote list could not be confirmed on an official UN page, so it was not added to table 2A. Check digitallibrary.un.org before quoting a symbol or naming countries that voted against it.
8. **Bloc positions:** Section 2C uses one source per bloc. The United States, Russia and China positions on Security Council debates come from Security Council Report, an independent research group, not from the governments themselves; delegates assigned those countries should read their own country's most recent speech.