

HMDC Presents... UNICEF: Video 2 Transcripts

These are the words spoken in the two Video 2 films for UNICEF (The United Nations and International Efforts). We read along while we watch, pause at each time mark, and circle any word we do not know so we can look it up together.

VIDEO 2 (EXPLAINER)

[0:00] Welcome, delegates. If you're preparing for Harvard MUN Online on December 5th and 6th, 2026, you are in exactly the right place. This is your official explainer briefing. Today, we're going to speak slowly and plainly to build your factual foundation on an absolutely critical topic. We're looking at childhood hunger, food waste, food recovery, and farmland restoration. Okay, let's dive right into this docket so you have the necessary tools to draft highly desirable resolutions for your committee. We'll be covering Section 1, the UN approach, Section 2, key UN resolutions, Section 3, what is working, Section 4, what is not working, Section 5, international actors, and finally, Section 6, closing the gaps. The UN approach. Let's begin with the foundation of how the United Nations operates in this space to help children. It's kind of like a giant puzzle, right? The UN works to help solve this topic through four main tracks, and it's crucial to understand how they all interlock. First, by setting global targets, like the sustainable development goals, which give the international community a very clear destination. Second, by declaring UN decades and awareness days, providing a timeline, and focusing global attention. Third, through Security Council action to condemn starvation and war, which provides necessary legal protection.

[1:17] And fourth, through active programs run by a vast network of agencies. We're talking about UNICEF, the World Food Program, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the UN Environment Program, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. These agencies literally do the heavy lifting on the ground. Key UN resolutions. Let's see how all this builds into the legal precedents you absolutely must know to establish international rules. I'm going to read these out slowly, so definitely grab a pen and write them down. First up, A-slash-R-E-S-slash-44-slash-25, which in 1989 adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is your bedrock text, making child nutrition a fundamental right, not a privilege. Next, A-slash-R-E-S-slash-70-slash-1, which in 2015 established the sustainable development goals, including target 12.3 on food waste. Then, A-slash-R-E-S-slash-70-slash-259, which in 2016 declared the decade of action on nutrition, and S-slash-R-E-S-slash-2417, which according to the United Nations Press on May 24, 2018 famously condemns starvation as a weapon of war.

[2:29] Continuing our list with A-slash-R-E-S-slash-73-slash-284, which in 2019 declared the decade on ecosystem restoration. This directly ties to the right to food because, well, you simply cannot grow food on dead land. Next is UNEA-4 Resolution 2 from 2019. This one focused on a priority order, of prevention first, then recovery, according to the UNEP Law and Environment Assistance Platform. Then, A-slash-R-E-S-slash-74-slash-209, creating an awareness day every September 29, according to the UN Digital Library on December 19, and finally, A-slash-R-E-S-slash-79-slash-171, which in 2024 reaffirmed the universal right to food. What is working? Let's take an objective look at highly desirable outcomes to see exactly what is effectively reducing childhood hunger right now. We have actually seen highly desirable progress on child nutrition over the past decade. According to the United Nations Statistics Division Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026, global stunting fell from 26.4% to 23.2%.

[3:35] Stunting simply means a child is too short for their age due to chronic long-term malnutrition. In that same exact report, wasting dropped from 7.4% to 6.6%. Wasting means a child is dangerously thin from immediate starvation. This is crucial because it proves that dedicated interventions can and do help. Furthermore, direct action saves lives. And it's the exact reason those percentages are dropping. According to UNICEF, on October 14, 2024, exactly 5.6 million children have been successfully treated for severe wasting since 2022. When programs have the resources they need, they create a highly desirable and immediate impact on the ground. Additionally, according to the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, on July 28, 2025, a total of 128 national food system plans have been written and established.

[4:25] This is a massive victory, for sure. It means the vast majority of governments are willing to act and already have a framework in place to help children, which your resolutions can directly build upon. What is not working? Conversely, we have to identify what is causing harm and requires immediate attention from your committee. There's a really tragic tension here. While we are treating millions of children, the target to halve food waste is failing. According to the United Nations Statistics Division Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026, food loss has remained completely stagnant at an undesirable 13.3%. This means billions of meals are lost and left to rot, while children just miles away go hungry. Compounding this massive waste, there's a severe resource crisis causing immense harm. According to UNICEF, on October 14, 2024, 2 million children are at risk of missing treatment for wasting. This is a totally urgent crisis. These children face grave harm directly due to a massive aid collapse, as detailed by the Council on Foreign Relations on December 23, 2025, and echoed by dire warnings from the World Food Program on October 21, 2025. The final harm occurs in conflict zones, where accountability is essentially non-existent. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, on April 13, 2026, there is absolutely no enforcement of S-slash-R-E-S-slash-2417. Starvation is still being utilized as a weapon, and the lack of international punishment is highly undesirable for the safety and survival of children. International actors. The crucial point here is understanding who else is acting to help outside the immediate UN framework. You don't have to solve this all alone. There are broad coalitions waiting to partner with your resolutions. Key actors in this space include Champions 12.3, which pushes for food waste reduction, and IFAD, which funds loss reduction on small family farms. Also incredibly vital is the School Meals Coalition and the G20 Pledge to Double School Meals, according to the Rockefeller Foundation on November 15, 2024.

[6:24] This is a highly desirable initiative because it guarantees a child gets at least one reliable meal a day while receiving an education. Furthermore, major financial pledges were raised by Nutrition for Growth, according to the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement on April 1, 2025. Other vital actors are working to heal damaged land, which, if you remember, is the practical application of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration we discussed earlier. These involve the Great Green Wall, according to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification on March 27, 2023. There is also the AFR100 Initiative, led by African nations, according to the World Resources Institute on November 24, 2020. Finally, the G20 Global Land Initiative has made a shared promise to halve degraded land, connecting healthy soil directly to healthy children. Closing the Gaps Let's move to the exact gaps you delegates need to close to create a highly desirable resolution.

[7:18] A successful UNICEF resolution could help close these specific gaps by providing actionable insights. First, by demanding transparent digital tracking mechanisms for unpaid financial pledges, so nations are actually held accountable. Second, by broadening funding structures, to escape dependence on just one major donor, creating true economic resilience. Third, by funding specific agricultural technology and software to fix the weak measurement of food waste, because we can't manage what we don't measure, right? And fourth, by proposing practical logistics and safe corridors to reach children currently trapped and unreachable in conflict zones. As you head into committee, I want to leave you with this provocative thought. How will you design a resolution that takes this complex, factual foundation, deeply addresses the undesirable harms, and turns it all into a highly desirable reality for children worldwide? The tools are right there in your hands, delegates.

[8:11] Best of success to you all.

VIDEO 2 (CINEMATIC)

[0:00] In 2025, 645 million people faced chronic hunger. The geographic epicenter of this crisis is shifting toward Africa, which now holds the largest population of hungry people in the world—over 300 million. For children, hunger inflicts two distinct physical harms. Chronic long-term malnutrition causes stunting, which restricts a child's height and permanently limits their brain development. An acute, sudden lack of food causes wasting, rapidly depleting a child's body mass to a point where they may die without immediate clinical intervention. The United Nations Children's Fund, or UNICEF, is tasked with minimizing both of these outcomes. They must navigate a collapsing global supply chain to deliver nutrition to the children who need it most.

[0:46] Executing logistics operation on a global scale requires a codified legal structure. Nations must agree on the rules before they can align their resources to solve the problem. The foundation of that structure was laid in 1989 with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This resolution established a specific international legal standard. It classified access to health and nutritious food not as a charitable privilege granted by a state, but as an undeniable human right owed to every child. Passing a resolution sets a baseline. But engineering the physical supply chains required to grow, transport, and distribute that food across borders is a vastly more complex challenge. To address the logistics, the UN shifted from declaring broad rights to setting quantifiable operational targets in 2015.

[1:31] They established the Sustainable Development Goals. Target 12.3 specifically mandates a 50% reduction in systemic food waste and a massive decrease in food loss by 2030. Three years later, the framework expanded to address the deliberate disruption of these food systems by military conflict. The Security Council passed Resolution 2417. This strictly condemned the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare and authorized the UN to report whenever armed conflict created a risk of famine. By 2019, the General Assembly expanded the mandate again. They created the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration to repair the damaged soil that grows our food and designated an official Awareness Day to combat food loss. That same year, the UN Environment Assembly established a strict priority order for handling resources.

[2:22] Countries must prevent food waste first and only then attempt to recover and redistribute the surplus. The United Nations has constructed a highly detailed comprehensive policy framework. Yet resolutions do not harvest crops, refrigerate transit lines, or feed children on their own. We can measure the physical impact of these policies. Over 12 years, global child stunting decreased from over 26% to 23%. Medical interventions are scaling effectively. Since 2022, UNICEF programs have delivered life-saving treatment to 5.6 million children. This treatment relies heavily on ready-to-use therapeutic food, or RUTF. These peanut-based packets reverse severe wasting in six to eight weeks.

[3:07] But there is a paradox in the data. While emergency clinical treatments are working, the macro-level supply chains providing everyday nutrition have stalled entirely. According to the UN Statistics Division, food loss between harvest and retail did not decrease over the last decade. It actually increased slightly, stagnating at 13.3%. Simultaneously, the world continues to waste 1.05 billion tons of consumer food annually, while roughly 800 million people remain chronically hungry. The data reveals a clear divide. Treating the symptoms of hunger through emergency intervention works. Curing the underlying disease of an inefficient global food system is failing. That failure was compounded by a severe financial shock.

[3:53] In 2025, the global humanitarian sector entered a steep aid recession. Government funding plummeted from a peak of \$30 billion in 2022, wiping out nearly a decade of growth. Because of this contraction, 25 million fewer people received humanitarian aid in 2025. This capital flight threatens UNICEF's most successful clinical programs. Without steady funding, the production and distribution of therapeutic food breaks down. UNICEF has already warned that nearly 2 million children suffering from severe wasting risk missing their treatments entirely due to these supply shortages. The core vulnerability of this system is its lack of diversification. The global humanitarian budget relies heavily on a few key governments, with the United States alone supplying nearly 40 percent of all international aid.

[4:44] International mandates and legal targets offer zero protection to a starving child, when the financial mechanisms executing them simply run dry. With international policy stalled and official aid contracting, a network of non-UN actors, private alliances, and independent foundations has stepped in to fill the execution gap. Independent operations are recovering the surplus food governments miss. In 2024, the Global FoodBanking Network served 38 million people, redistributing 762 million kilograms of food. Other coalitions target specific logistical endpoints, like the school day. The School Meals Coalition is organizing donors and governments to deliver free or low-cost, highly nutritious meals to 150 million more children by 2030.

[5:30] These independent frameworks are successfully marshalling political capital. The G20 recently launched an Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty to accelerate these exact logistics. We can see the financial result of this momentum. At the Nutrition for Growth Summit in Paris, national governments committed over \$27 billion in new pledges to address the crisis. The United Nations legislates the targets. But today, it is these distinct outside coalitions that are organizing the capital and executing the logistics. Ultimately, no logistics network can distribute food that never grows. Human-caused land degradation directly restricts crop yields and is currently linked to 47 million stunted children worldwide. International projects address this ecology.

[6:16] Africa's Great Green Wall aims to repair 100 million hectares of degraded land through tree planting and soil restoration. Yet, this project exposes a massive execution failure. International donors pledged \$19 billion to fund the restoration. But as of 2023, only \$2.5 billion had actually been paid out. In response to broken promises, African nations are taking ownership of their own agricultural ecosystems through independent frameworks like the AFR100 Initiative. Rather than waiting for external aid, 33 African nations have independently pledged to restore 129 million hectares of land, exceeding the continent's original target. High-profile pledges generate headlines. But pledges without payouts leave the most vulnerable children waiting on political promises that never materialize into calories.

[7:08] Securing the future of global childhood nutrition right now requires identifying and closing four specific major structural vulnerabilities. Gap one is financial delivery. There is a massive discrepancy between political capital pledged at international summits and the actual currency deployed to the field. Gap two is systemic fragility, allowing the entire global humanitarian apparatus to rely heavily on the budgets of a single donor nation. Gap three is an inability to measure. Governments cannot enforce food waste policies or cut agricultural losses without stringent tracking systems, which currently exist in only a handful of wealthy nations. Four is geopolitical access. Despite Security Council resolutions condemning starvation, warring parties operate without punishment, leaving millions of children in conflict zones entirely unreachable.

[8:01] Combating hunger is no longer a matter of simply declaring a right to food. Instead, it requires actively fusing advanced agricultural science, complex supply chain logistics, and massive ecological restoration into a single, highly functional global system. For UNICEF, the committee's mandate is absolute. Every abstract target proposed in committee, whether it is repairing rural cold chains or recovering degraded farmland, must mathematically calculate down to a physical reduction in child stunting and wasting. HMDC Forensics, Harvard Model United Nations Online, December 2026. Identify the logistical gaps, secure the capital, and connect every program to a child.