

2023 Global Economic Forum
Food Insecurity
Background Briefing Paper

Food Insecurity: An Introspective

People move the world. But to fuel this movement they need food. Food nourishes us, it keeps us healthy and we need it to survive. We live on a planet that naturally produces our source of energy but in spite of that reality we still struggle to feed everybody. Across 79 countries, 349 million people still live through acute food insecurity with almost 900 million people surviving through famine-like conditions. These alarming statistics were recorded in 2021. They were also record high results for each category.

The world certainly has more than enough food to sufficiently feed the global population. Yet inefficient distribution, production, and consumption, not to mention other external factors like climate change and conflict, remain key reasons as to why food insecurity exists and continues to persist. Additionally, funding for programs that combat food insecurity does not match the increasing number of people living in food insecurity and is not likely to keep up under the current state of things.¹ Food insecurity is caused by a series of certain problems and also quite ironically contributes to them as well.

Some populations are more at risk than others. Urban and rural localities, even in wealthy countries, can experience food insecurity because of poverty and an inability to finance eating. These areas are also considered to be **food deserts**, areas where nutritious food is scarce either because of the lack of infrastructure to support it, or the lack of desire to trade or grow there. The resulting insecurity further exacerbates the same issues that cause it by continuing to drive poverty and an inability to produce or obtain food.

On a micro level, individuals who live alone, as well as single families, and children under 6 are the most at risk to experience food insecurity.² On a more macro level, areas that are more likely to experience widespread food insecurity are those with insufficient capacity to grow crops and areas with turbulent weather patterns such as those prone to floods, hurricanes and droughts. From a distribution point of

¹ "A Global Food Crisis: World Food Programme." UN World Food Programme. Accessed February 27, 2023. <https://www.wfp.org/global-hunger-crisis#:~:text=A%20record%20349%20million%20people,survive%20in%20famine%20like%20conditions>.

² "Key Statistics & Graphics." USDA ERS - Key Statistics & Graphics, 2022. [https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/key-statistics-graphics/#:~:text=Food%20Insecurity%20by%20Household%20Characteristics,-The%20prevalence%20of&text=Households%20with%20children%20under%20age%206%20\(12.9%20percent\),living%20alone%20\(12.3%20percent\)](https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/key-statistics-graphics/#:~:text=Food%20Insecurity%20by%20Household%20Characteristics,-The%20prevalence%20of&text=Households%20with%20children%20under%20age%206%20(12.9%20percent),living%20alone%20(12.3%20percent)).

view, food insecurity has become more rampant because of **inflation** and the increasing price of fuel to transport the food.

International Age of Eating

Perhaps the most commonly traded commodity on an international level is food. This is not only a present reality but a historic one stretching all the way back to the **spice trade**. The result of this dependency is clear to see in global trade patterns. The United States imports 70-85 percent of their fish supply. Italy imports 51 percent of all grain from Russia. Global food imports alone account for \$2 trillion USD of the globe's \$96 trillion USD **GDP**. This is not to mention the additional costs that go into food production. As a result of this overwhelming dependency, when disturbances occur in the global supply chain, entire continents can feel the effect.

Additionally, countries with high levels of dependency on global food imports are very much at the mercy of the rest of the world. When internal issues such as natural disasters or external issues such as trade disputes or conflict break out, they have the potential to create widespread food insecurity in an entire region. The five global regions with the highest number of people facing food insecurity as a proportion are the Middle East, East Africa, West Africa, Caribbean, and Southern Asia. These areas share four commonalities: heightened levels of conflict, climates disproportionately affected by global warming (especially as it relates to droughts and flooding), a lack of fertile space to grow food, and the aforementioned global dependency.³

The current picture of food insecurity is very much driven by current events. High production costs of food remains a key driving force of insecurity especially regarding how it is impacted by climate change. As a result of globalization, the current global food system contributes to up to a third of all greenhouse gas emissions. These same emissions have helped to contribute to almost 80% of global biodiversity loss. Global food systems also use around 70% of the world's fresh water. These climate processes caused by an inefficient production and distribution of food also continue to pour fuel on the fire as these events become cyclical. Continued inefficient production results in continued climate change, and vice versa.

By far the most prevalent event aggravating insecurity is conflict. 70% of all people experiencing food insecurity live in countries impacted by war. Further evidence can be found in the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia, where forced migration and economic collapse have not only greatly impacted security in those countries, but have raised prices and created food shortages all across the western world. Similar effects can be found in the Middle East especially in active conflict areas such as Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen.

³ Koenig, Denise. "5 Worst Spots for Hunger." World Vision, April 4, 2022.
<https://www.worldvision.org/hunger-news-stories/5-worst-spots-hunger>.

Strategizing Solutions

Global food insecurity has been combated through a number of different methods and programs most notably through organizations such as the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** and the **World Food Programme (WFP)**. A variety of different approaches exist, all that are ever changing, all that target specific areas and change based on location. While the WFP works to provide food to areas experiencing poor nutrition and natural disaster, FAO works to create sustainable food systems. The FAO has the added benefit of working within an international network full of diverse perspectives that allows them to come up with innovative solutions to combating insecurity and create a reasonable framework. However, both of these programs are not funded at a level that is sufficient enough to keep up with the growing crisis. The strategies that these two organizations incorporate are also the two most common methods used to support areas experiencing food insecurity.

The first strategy is a responsive approach. Responsive approaches usually seek to connect existing resources and means to the most at risk or in need areas. An example can be seen in programs such as Home Grown School Meals, which creates new food supply chains by connecting local farmers with local schools to deliver food to young children, a demographic considered to be at higher risk for food insecurity. Some programs are more redistributive in nature such as **food pantries** or resharing programs, that seek to capture food that would otherwise be wasted and make it available to populations who need it most. Responsive approaches usually seek to connect existing resources and means to the most at risk or in need areas. They create new flows of resources by linking points like farmers with communities, or countries with overabundance with countries of need. They seek to identify how to better distribute resources.

The other strategy incorporates developmental approaches. Plans to create sustainable systems where none exist. These programs require a substantial amount of research but are highly transformative. An integral approach that FAO uses to create these systems involves selecting a representative to head operations in a specific country or location and then setting up a scouting network. The scouting network reports on the overall situation in the surrounding area: what food exists, what nutrients are lacking, what crops are being produced, where they can be produced, and at what capacity. These scouts also seek to see if the farmers have enough capital to produce new and existing agriculture and if their techniques are the most efficient. Using this information developmental programs then introduce the required capital to bridge gaps, and educate farmers on the best methods to maximize efficient production. The program then provides oversight for a limited amount of time to ensure these methods are being executed and once they have enough confidence that local farmers can continue production independently, they pull out of the location. Developmental approaches are transformative because they create entirely new food systems and efficiently remodel existing ones.



The Charge - Create a Regional Policy Proposal Presentation

The **2023 Global Economic Forum** will simulate the international community's fight against growing global risks. The World Bank is seeking to fund innovative solutions to this crisis, and has called for interested policymakers to submit their proposals. Invited Student Delegates (that's you!) will represent an assigned global region and committee topic related to the issue of *Food Insecurity*. Each team will present their strategy for combating this evolving issue to other students in their committee representing other global regions at the very beginning of the Forum's first committee breakout session. After hearing each region's initial presentation, your committee will then collaborate on a collective policy proposal aimed at solving your committee's topic on a global scale, while representing the needs and opportunities of each represented regional group.

During the Closing Plenary at the end of the program day, each committee will present their policy proposals to the Closing Plenary. One member of each region in the committee group will present the committee's newly-created collective policy proposal. A panel of judges representing the World Bank will hear each committee proposal, ask clarifying questions, and ultimately determine a winning committee team, awarding them fictitious funding for their policy proposal.

It is critical that you read the separate [Instructions for Creating a Regional Policy Proposal Presentations](#) for further details and expectations. Teams are encouraged to utilize the provided presentation template (in your school's Google Drive program folder) when creating their Regional Policy Proposal presentations. Each team will have 3 minutes to present and should have no more than 5 slides in their presentation (not including the title slide). Each team should be prepared to answer 3 minutes of questions from their peers about their policy proposals.

This briefing paper should serve as a starting point for understanding the overall challenges of your assigned committee topic, however, you will also need to conduct additional research. Please see the Council's Global Economic Forum resources [webpage](#) for suggested additional resources. The purpose of this Forum is not only for Delegates to gain a holistic understanding of the social, political, and economic implications and consequences of the digital divide, but also for Delegates to also gain experience in the policymaking process as it relates to critical international issues. Best of luck!

Quick Facts

Find at least five quick facts from this briefing paper or in reputable online sources that will be useful in creating your Regional Policy Proposal. Quick facts should be about one sentence long and provide useful information on your assigned committee topic.

1. 70% of all people facing food insecurity live in countries experiencing war
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



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Questions to Consider

1. What are three of the five regions most impacted by food insecurity and what factors cause them?
2. What strategies can the global community enact to be better prepared to mitigate factors that perpetuate food insecurity?
3. What are the two common approaches to combating food insecurity and what are the differences between them?
4. Based on your regional assignment which of these strategies can best aid your policy proposal and why?

Glossary

Term	Description
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	A wing of the United Nations headquartered in Rome, Italy that is dedicated to international efforts to defeat hunger.
Food Desert	An area that has limited access to affordable, fresh or nutritious food
Food Pantry	A distribution center where hungry families or individuals can go to receive food
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	The annual monetary sum of all spending from government and private entities
Spice Trade	An ancient series of trade route used to ship spices amongst other goods across Eurasia
Inflation	An increase in prices caused by a decrease in the value of money
World Food Programme	A program within the United Nations headquartered in Rome, Italy that is dedicated to providing food assistance.