



## **Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN 2010) World Food Programme Background Guide**

Dear Delegates,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2010 Montessori Model UN and especially to the World Food Programme. My name is Christa Doyle and this is my fourth year attending the Montessori Model United Nations Conference. I served as a rapporteur and a vice-president in the previous two years and I am looking forward to serving as your president this year.

The World Food Programme is the largest food supplier in the world for people in need. It has faced its greatest challenge these past months due to the world economic crisis. Donor funds are down and those living in poverty are in greater need than ever before. The impact of natural disasters on the poor farmers and the breakdown of communities due to political unrest has led to worse conditions for many women in developing countries.

The following pages intend to guide you in the research of the topics that we will be debating. Please note that this guide will only provide the basis for your investigation. It is your responsibility to find as much research that you can on the topic and how it relates to the country that you represent. The more information that you have and learn about, the more you will take from debate and the whole MMUN experience.

I encourage you to learn all that you can about what your country is doing in regard to the selected topics.

Enjoy and see you in New York!

**Montessori Model United Nations 2010 Secretariat**

## About the World Food Programme (WFP)



The **United Nations World Food Programme** is the United Nations frontline agency whose mission it is to combat global hunger. Hunger afflicts one out of seven people on earth. Its vision is a world in which every man, woman and child has access at all times to the food needed for an active and healthy life.

### **Brief History**

The United Nations World Food Programme was founded in 1961. The Food and Agriculture (FAO) Organization and the United Nations General Assembly adopted parallel resolutions to establish the World Food Programme (WFP). It began operations in 1962, earlier than its expected opening date of January 1963, in response to an earthquake in Iran, a hurricane in Thailand and refugees in newly independent Algeria. Food assistance was needed in all of these instances and the WFP was asked to supply it.

Since it was founded, WFP has fed more than 1.4 billion of the world's poorest people and invested more than US\$30 billion in development and emergency relief. It employs roughly 12,000 staff. The majority of the staff (90%) works in the field and delivering food.

### **Organization**

The World Food Programme (WFP) headquarters are in Rome, Italy. The Executive Board oversees WFP's humanitarian and development food aid activities. The board is made up of 36 members who meet four times each year in Rome. The 36 board members are elected by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) and by the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Both ECOSOC and FAO elect 18 members to a three-year term on the executive board. Members can be reelected at the end of the three-year term.

The WFP relies on voluntary contributions to run its humanitarian and development projects. Governments are the WFP's principal source of funds. In an average year, more than 60 governments voluntarily provide funds for the humanitarian and development work of WFP. There has been an increase in business and individual contributions to WFP's mission.

## Partners

The WFP works closely with partners in the fight against global hunger. These partners include:

1. National Governments
2. Non-Governmental Organizations
3. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
4. International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD)
5. Corporate Partners: private companies provide transportation, food, information and communications technology.



## WFP Objectives

The five objectives of the WFP are:

1. Prepare for emergencies
2. Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies
3. Restore and rebuild lives after emergencies
4. Reduce chronic hunger and under nutrition everywhere
5. Strengthen the capacity of countries to reduce hunger.

## Operations

The WFP delivers food to victims of natural disasters and war or civil conflict. It transports more food than any other international organization. It uses various modes of transportation including ships, barges, trucks, trains, donkeys and dug out canoes. When necessary, WFP will build bridges or roads to reach the hungry. WFP operations reached just over 102 million people with food assistance in 2008. This food assistance was distributed in 78 countries. According to the WFP's 2009 Annual Report, the WFP is repositioning itself from a food aid agency to a food assistance agency.

## At MMUN 2010

### Topic 1: Creating Opportunity for Poor Farmers Worldwide

According to the WFP 2009 annual report, the number of undernourished people in the world increased in 2008 to 963 million, a rise of 115 million over the past two years. (4) What this means is that close to one in six people do not get enough food to live a healthy life. Hunger is the number one risk to health worldwide, larger than any disease. (5)

Hunger may be caused by natural disasters, conflict, poverty, poor agricultural development and overuse of the land. One result of these problems is that farmers are without land to grow food to feed their families and communities. In 2008, four storms hit Haiti and 30 percent of the agricultural harvest was wiped out.

Programs developed in Ethiopia, such as MERET, have allowed barren hillsides to be transformed and for farmers to successfully improve crops and land. Educational programs introduced to flood prone areas, such as in Bangladesh, have encouraged farmers to reconsider how and where crops are planted the location of new houses. Trees have been planted and regions have been rehabilitated.

At their meeting in Bern in April 2008, the Executive Heads of the UN called for action to support the farmers in developing countries to ensure the next harvest and to work to boost availability and access to food.

When considering your plan for creating opportunities for poor farmers worldwide, consider the following questions:

1. What kinds of disasters or conflicts have happened in your country recently that required WFP intervention?
2. Does your country have an active WFP presence?
3. How does your country support the WFP?
4. What can be done to help poor farmers worldwide sustain healthy food stores for their community?
5. What can be done to encourage farmers to stay in an area affected by natural disasters to work the land once the situation improves?
6. How can we boost access to food worldwide?



## Topic 2: Empowerment of Women to Eliminate Poverty Worldwide



Rising food and fuel prices have put 950 million people worldwide at risk of hunger and malnutrition according to the UN. Young children, whose early nutritional needs are critical to ensure long-term health, and women are at the greatest risk. Increasing farming costs, such as transportation and fertilizer, are adding to the great difficulties of the small farmer.

WFP, in its operations to relieve hunger around the world, has seen how a lack of adequate food leads to an environment of violence. Women and children are most vulnerable. To that end, it is necessary to reduce women's exposure to violence. WFP has implemented training and food aid programs to help women acquire the skills to become self-supporting. Educating men and encouraging support from men for women who begin small businesses after this training is vital in order to change attitudes towards gender discrimination.

There has been no sign in decrease of deaths due to pregnancy and childbirth in developing and poor countries. Nearly 15 million pregnant and nursing mothers are malnourished themselves. There is little funding available to healthcare for these women and therefore there are fewer women available to farm the land. In many instances, the woman is the sole family member left due to political unrest or natural disasters.

Women fill twenty percent of seats in national governments worldwide. Many decisions made in areas that are devastated by natural disasters are made without the consideration of the women in the community. When considering the empowerment of women to eliminate poverty, think about the following questions:

1. What challenges are facing the world due to the recent economic crisis? How has this impacted your country?
2. What role do women play in the government of your country?
3. Are there programs in place in your country to work towards empowering women?
4. What suggestions can you give governments or NGOs for improving the condition of women living in poverty?

## Recommended links:

1. World Food Programme (WFP), <http://www.wfp.org>
2. WFP's Simulation of Food Distribution, <http://food-force.com>
3. UN's Cyberschool Bus, <http://www.un.org/pubs/cyberschoolbus/>
4. UN Food and Agriculture Organization, <http://fao.org>
5. UN Humanitarian Affairs, <http://un.org/ha/>
6. UN Millennium Development Goals, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>