

**1. Abstract**

This background paper will explore food insecurity in lesser developed countries: the background paper will also further look into the aspects that could alter the root of this issue. This paper will contain a timeline of events, background information, and possible solutions. This paper aims to ensure that delegates have the grounds to craft relevant resolutions and extravagant debates.

**2. Introduction**

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), founded in 1945, is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. As one of the original committees of the function, ECOSOC contains immense value to the United Nations as it contains 54 member states and many subsidiary bodies and regional commissions that operate under it and report back to ECOSOC regularly.

ECOSOC’s primary role is to promote international economic and social cooperation and development. It acts as a forum for discussing and addressing a wide range of economic and social issues that could destabilise international peace and relations. Examples of ECOSOC’s work include E/RES/2023/27 when a resolution calling for "equal access to justice for all” was successfully passed in August of 2023.

When looking forward to the future, ECOSOC’s ulterior motives include ensuring a world in which they can finance sustainable development to make it attainable and inclusive to all people. Another primary objective for ECOSOC is to promote economic development and cooperation and to bridge the social gap between all parties to eradicate inequalities and promote inclusion and cohesion. However, an underlying issue that ECOSOC wishes to address in further detail is the access to fundamental necessities such as clean water, shelter, beneficial healthcare, and adequate sanitation, this is showcased as 2 billion people around the globe do not have access to clean water, and a staggering 3.6 billion people do not have access to adequate sanitation. This speaks to the lengths of how important ECOSOC is in ensuring that billions of people have access to essential supplies, and this is why its primary aim is to promote the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

**3. Glossary**

Agricultural Productivity - Agricultural Productivity refers to the efficiency of producing agricultural products in Agricultural Production Systems.

Famine - Famine is the extreme shortage of food, normally under times of diseases that affects crops, natural disasters and times of conflict.

Food Aid - Food Aid is the provision of food to civilians, often during times of food insecurity or crisis (war, natural disasters etc.).

Food Insecurity - Food Insecurity is the lack of consistent access or provision of food services to a group of people to efficiently sustain a life that is not filled with malnutrition or starvation.

Food Sovereignty - Food Sovereignty refers to the rights of individuals and communities to control and dictate their own food system to properly ensure that every person has access to food in an culturally,socially and economically acceptable way.

Gender Equity in Agriculture - Gender Equity in Agriculture is the equality that men and women face in the agricultural field, especially in how women are treated in this field, gender equity in agriculture also looks at the opportunities that women are given in order to produce and lead in this field.

Inflation - Inflation is seen as the general rise in price levels of goods and services over a period of time, these tend to be dramatic increases in price levels as they drastically the effect of how people spend their income.

Least Economically Developed Countries (LDC’s) - Nations that do not possess strong economies and tend to have lower sums of GDP and lower standards of living, these countries are characterised by low income, weak levels of healthcare and education and find difficulties in ensuring sustainable development.

Malnutrition - Malnutrition is the lack of proper nutrition, normally characterised by an imbalance of essential nutrients or impaired nutrient utilisation.

Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture - Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture is the agricultural sector that focuses on improving nutritional outcomes, normally to ensure that all essential nutrients are provided during this agricultural period.

Poverty - Poverty is when civilians are very poor, there is a poverty threshold that the World Bank has designated. If civilians earn less than $2.15 a day,then they are classified as in poverty, people in poverty tend to have extremely low levels of food security.

Socioeconomic Disparities - Inequality that is stemmed from socioeconomic factors (the interactions between the social and economic habits of a group of a group of people).

**4. Description of the Issue**

The issue of food insecurity is an issue that has been going on for millenia, from our ancestors hunting food for hours every day, to them birthing the craft of agriculture. Ensuring food security has always been one of the primary objectives for all human beings and it is a crime against humanity if people around the globe are deprived of this necessity.

However as times pass, food insecurity has became less of a pressuring issue as countries and economies developed overtime, however some Least Economically Developed Countries (LDC’s), still face some troubles regarding food security as their economy is not developed to the point that all civilians can sustain a high standard of living.These countries simply lack the resources to meet these demands as they tend to have inadequate infrastructure,limited access to resources, or even tend to have conflict or natural disasters that limit them.The origins of this issue can be traced mark to colonial exploitation, and the post colonial struggles that these countries have gone through, these systemic inequalities have severely limited these LDC’s from fully developing the skill or the infrastructure to create manageable levels of food security.These challenges create barriers to food production, distribution and access, thus exacerbating food insecurity against these countries.

By having food insecurity in these countries, they open the door for malnutrition and starvation, as civilians could easily have an imbalance of nutrients, or even could just not find food and thus starve. This would lower the standard of living and the life expectancy of member states as civilians would be more vulnerable to diseases if their body is not getting the right nutrients to sustain itself.Especially when looking at the youth, if they do not have the right nutrients to let them grow and develop into adults, we will see considerably lower amount So by ensuring ways to access food products, the overall life expectancy, disease immunity and life expectancy would rise substantially.

Also, by having high levels of food insecurity, it makes food unaffordable due to the high demand for it, and the low supply of food. This means that people are either starving, or they are paying unnecessary amounts of money to buy food. By buying food, they are sacrificing their income as they have low amounts of cash to use on other necessities of life, such as healthcare, sanitation and adequate education. This means that even though these people are getting food,they are falling below the poverty line as they don’t have the resources to ensure a high standard of living as a lot of their income is spent on food.

These impacts could be detrimental on the civilians, especially the rural committee, as they rely heavily on agriculture as their livelihood, so inefficient techniques,machinery and infrastructure limit the production potential, thus contributing to low crop yields and food insecurity.Also, a lot of these countries suffer from famines in the rural areas, so these people have agriculture as their primary means of feeding themselves, meaning that they frequently suffer from food insecurity.Seeing as farmers in these areas are frequent, by having no means of trade or work, the economy in these areas could virtually collapse as there is no labour or trade to be done without the presence of agriculture.

Women also face proportionally higher levels of disadvantages in these scenarios.In these parts of the world,women bear a large burden in producing and providing food, however they face many systematic barriers in terms of land ownership and access to resources, they lack the proper education and training in order to become efficient farmers, so they tend to lack the skills and knowledge to properly stabilise food security.Women also face less economic opportunities, as they are less likely to find high paying jobs due to their lack of training, because of these gaps in knowledge they lack the financial resources to stabilise their food security in high levels of sustainability.Furthermore cultural norms mean that men usually have the say in decision making in regards to food allocation and healthcare, so in times of crisis, women are left more vulnerable to food insecurity.

Children are another group that tend to be targeted in terms of food insecurity, they face higher consequences of malnutrition and starvation as this targets their development and growth, as long lasting consequences stem from these nutritional deficiencies, the death risk also is proven to rise in more severe incarnations.Possible consequences include increased risk of disease, stunted growth and severe stunts in motor and cognitive development. By having inadequate access to clean water, sanitation and beneficiary nutrients, a whole generation of children could seriously be handicapped,and this means that they will never be able to progress further as a society.

Ethnic groups and minorities also face serious consequences in face of food security, they face constant discrimination in these areas. Socioeconomic disparities and unequal access to resources have further marginalised these contrasting groups, which are further amplified by the close minded nature of LDCs.Meaning that in times of lack of food, these discriminatory policies will prevent these minorities from satisfactory levels of food.

UN policies have previously tried to counter and root out this underlying issue in society,this has been characterised by the implementation of multiple organisations in order to address these types of issues. The World Food Programme was founded in 1961, with the purpose of emergency food relief, and worldwide food assistance.The United Nations Development Programme has many functions, one of which is linked to eradicating poverty and with that, food insecurity.It supports initiatives to incorporate nutrition goals and strengthening services to essentials, food being one of them.The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) stands solely to assist in eliminating food insecurity, and its innate specification towards agriculture means that it gravitates towards LDC’s as they are intertwined with each other.The FAO aims in promoting sustainable agriculture and eradicating hunger and ensuring that vital nutrients are supplied towards civilians alike.

**Statistics that could be used to back up claims made in this paper:**

* 783 million people worldwide suffer from chronic hunger (approximately under 10% of the world's population)
* Majority of these people come from the Sub Saharan Region in Africa, with 33% of their population suffering from this (main reason is low household income).
* 627 million people live in extreme poverty, 70% are in rural areas.
* When looking in terms of moderate poverty, 74% of all moderate poverty reside in rural areas.
* 149 million children under the age of 5 have stunted growth, with the primary reason being down to malnutrition.
* Approximately 45% of deaths in children under the age of 5 in LDCs come down to malnourishment.
* More than 333 million people are facing acute levels of food insecurity.
* 45 million children under the age of 5 are facing acute malnutrition

**5. History / Current Situation / Timeline of Events :**

Early to Late 20th Century - Most of these Least Economically Developed Countries were entrenched deep in heavy colonialism and felt the long term effects of it as this meant that natural resources were exploited and growth in the economy were minimal.

October 1945 - The Food and Agriculture Organization is opened, with the sole purpose of eradicating world hunger and stabilising food security. Later on that month,the United Nations was born, with the aim of promoting international economic,social and humanitarian issues.

September 1971 - The General Assembly identifies the LDCs as a distinct group that are facing many challenges, one being lack of food security.

1980s-1990s - The Structural Adjustment Programs were implemented primarily during this time period in many developing countries in order to facilitate agricultural subsidies and rural development programs.

November 1996 - The World Food Summit set the goal of halving undernourished people by 2015 at the Rome declaration at World Food Security.

April 2008 - There was a global food price crisis which heavily affected food security, not only in less developed countries, but all countries regardless of economic stature.

June 2012 - There was a conference on Sustainable Development which also pledged the importance of sustainable agriculture and food security.

July 2015 - Addis Ababa Action Agenda occurred in which they provided a global framework for financing sustainable development, in which financing food security was one of the aforementioned topics.

September 2015 - The UN Sustainable Development goals was published, in which Sustainable Development Goal Number 2 was “Zero Hunger”, in which they acknowledged the rise in food insecurity, and pledged to end it by 2030.

March 2020 - Covid 19 became a widespread pandemic and thus destabilised the economy and provided the grounds for minimal food security due to the lack of economic stability.

Climate Change (present) - Due to the otherworldly weather conditions, they have disrupted agricultural production, leading to shortages and higher prices, thus straining levels of food security.

**6. Possible Solutions**

International Trade of Agricultural Products - By trading agricultural products with other countries, we are allowing countries to increase their production of agricultural products in order to provide food security to many civilians.

Lowering Gender Gap in Agriculture - By removing this gender gap, we are increasing the amount of women that work in agriculture, this means that there would be an increase in the number of people in the labour force, so there would be more food produced.

Improvement in Infrastructure - By having better infrastructure, there are better facilities and better tools for workers and machines to utilise so that the production of food would be quicker and higher in quality, so civilians would have more food, and would have more nutritious food in order to prevent malnutrition and starvation.

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