



SRMUN VIRTUAL 2022

October 7-9, 2022

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Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to the SRMUN Virtual 2022 and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). UNCTAD was created as an organ of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in December 1964 through resolution 1995 (XIX). UNCTAD's main objective has been to increase the competitiveness of markets in developing Member States in order for them to be viable players in the global economy. Diversification, technological access, protection from financial volatility, and fair competition are some of the values that the organization works towards for all Member States. The organization also places emphasis on aiding other UN departments in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

By focusing on the mission of UNCTAD, we have developed the following topic for delegates to discuss at the conference:

I. Enhancing the Global Response to Food Insecurity in Conflict

This background guide provides an introduction to the committee and the topics that will be debated at SRMUN Virtual 2022. It should be utilized as a foundation for a delegate's independent research. However, while we have attempted to provide a holistic analysis of the issues, the background guide should not be used as the single mode of analysis for the topics. Delegates are expected to go beyond the background guide and engage in intellectual inquiry of their own. The position papers for the committee should reflect the complexity of these issues and their externalities. Delegations are expected to submit a position paper and be prepared for a vigorous discussion at the conference.

Position papers should be no longer than two pages in length (single spaced) and demonstrate your Member State's position, policies, and recommendations on each of the two topics. For more detailed information about formatting and how to write position papers, delegates can visit srmun.org. **All position papers MUST be submitted no later than Monday, September 19th, 2022, by 11:59pm EST via the SRMUN website to be eligible for Outstanding Position Paper Awards.**

We are enthusiastic about SRMUN's newest virtual conference returning for another year, and we wish you all the best of luck in your conference preparation and look forward to working with you in the near future. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions while preparing for the conference.

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History of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was created in 1964 as a permanent body of the United Nations (UN) to address various developing Member States' areas of economic concern and other general trade and investment issues around the globe. As developing and newly-independent Member States recognized a lack of support and recognition from other economic and financial-related organizations, they pushed for the creation of a forum that highlighted and focused on their particular economic interests.¹ These same developing Member States would form the Group of 77 (G77).² Because of the unique nature of concerns to be addressed under this forum, including those tied to developing Member States' newly gained independence, there was continued debate on whether what would become UNCTAD would be better suited under the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) or the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Ultimately, developing Member States pushed for UNCTAD to be under the UNGA as they believed its organization maintained a greater democratic process more suited to entertain and uplift developing countries' issues of economic development and international cooperation.³ The initial agenda of UNCTAD focused on providing an international framework for commodity agreements, providing supplementary financing, and demanding preference in developed markets for the industrial exports of developing Member States.⁴ Overall, UNCTAD's official mission is to promote international trade, create policies tackling economic development problems, and to exist as a forum through which governments may balance their trade and development policies.⁵ UNCTAD sessions are held once every four years and these sessions are viewed as consecutive prolonged efforts to achieve solutions on trade and economic development issues around the globe.⁶ UNCTAD is currently led by Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan, who was formerly the vice president of Costa Rica and accepted the position in September 2021.⁷ Secretary-General Grynspan's term will end in 2025.

Although responding to both the UNGA and ECOSOC, UNCTAD still maintains its own commissions and subsidiary commissions. The Trade and Development Board (TDB) is one of the main commissions. Consisting of 55 members, the TDB has carried out executive functions of UNCTAD including decision-making and ensuring set agendas remain consistent with agency's mission.⁸ This commission also maintains the responsibility of preparing for future UNCTAD conference sessions. The TDB meets once every September, reporting to the UNGA and it meets in executive sessions three times a year, each session lasting one day.⁹ UNCTAD also has a Secretariat comprising of 400 staffers, who work together to raise awareness on issues, conduct economic research, influence policies and actions in national capitals, and interact directly with developing countries. The UNCTAD secretariat serves to facilitate and find development opportunities for developing Member States.¹⁰ UNCTAD receives a budget of approximately USD 68 Million directly from the UN, an increase from the previous USD 67.7 Million in 2020. It also receives an extra USD 40 Million kept aside for any technical assistance funds, which had decreased from the

¹ UNCTAD SECRETARIAT. 2006. "UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE on TRADE and DEVELOPMENT UNCTAD: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW." https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/gds20061_en.pdf

² UNCTAD. n.d. "History | UNCTAD." Unctad.org. <https://unctad.org/about/history>.

³ UNCTAD SECRETARIAT. 2006. "UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE on TRADE and DEVELOPMENT UNCTAD: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW."

⁴ Masoumed Sahami, "UNCTAD's history, mission, and structure," Induction Course 2012. UNCTAD, http://unctad.org/meetings/en/Presentation/indcourse2012_ISS_en.pdf

⁵ United Nations General Assembly. n.d. "Establishment of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development as an Organ of the General Assembly. - United Nations Digital Library System." Digitallibrary.un.org. Accessed February 22, 2022. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/203700/files/A_RES_1995%28XIX%29-EN

⁶ Nun, Bernardo P. 1972. "UNCTAD." *Lawyer of the Americas* 4 (3): 449–59. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40175626>

⁷ UNCTAD. 2021. "Rebeca Grynspan Takes over as Head of UNCTAD | UNCTAD." Unctad.org. September 13, 2021. <https://unctad.org/news/rebeca-grynspan-takes-over-head-unctad#:~:text=The%20former%20vice%20president%20of>.

⁸ UNCTAD SECRETARIAT. 2006. "UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE on TRADE and DEVELOPMENT UNCTAD: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW."

⁹ UNCTAD SECRETARIAT. 2006. "UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE on TRADE and DEVELOPMENT UNCTAD: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW."

¹⁰ UNCTAD SECRETARIAT. 2006. "UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE on TRADE and DEVELOPMENT UNCTAD: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW."

previous USD 42.8 Million set aside in 2020.¹¹ Other sources of funding include trust funds comprised of voluntary contributions from donors including Member State governments, the European Union (EU), the UN system such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Programme budget, and international organizations from both the private and public sectors.¹²

The decision-making process in UNCTAD is unique in that all forum debates are within group systems. Member States in UNCTAD are divided into four groups consisting of Groups A, B, C, and D. Such groups are divided based on their international socioeconomic status as well as their geographic location.¹³ Group A consists of African and Asian Member States and retains 22 seats in the TDB. Group B includes developed market-economy Member States and also has 22 seats.¹⁴ Group C comprises of Latin American and Caribbean Member States and has nine seats on the TDB, and Group D includes Eastern European Member States with six allocated seats.¹⁵ All substantive decisions at UNCTAD require a two-thirds majority of present and voting Member States, however, at the TDB, a simple majority of present and voting Member States suffices to pass all substantive decisions.¹⁶ The group system is renowned for its work genuinely geared towards structural change and its consistent deliberation and consideration of positions, which altogether, facilitate the decision-making process.¹⁷

UNCTAD has undergone many policy shifts with the passing of time, reflecting international developments and attitudes in international trade. As the world reached the 1980s, developing Member States fell into debt despite the efforts of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and focus was shifted towards privatizing state-run enterprises.¹⁸ UNCTAD worked via a multi-faceted approach to increase trade efficiency in the effort to give developing countries more benefits from international trade.¹⁹ UNCTAD also helped pass the 1989 Agreement on the Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries, which allowed freedom of tariff control for developing Member States.²⁰ In the 1990s, UNCTAD helped conclude the Uruguay Round of trade talks in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which helped establish the United Nations World Trade Organization (UNWTO).²¹ As world trade increased, financial instability increased and variability of financial woes among developing Member States increased. UNCTAD held its tenth conference in February of 2000 in Bangkok, in which UNCTAD adopted a policy of reciprocity and dismantling barriers to international trade.²² In the aftermath of the Great Recession in 2008 and 2009, UNCTAD worked to mitigate global economic fallout by pinpointing the global

¹¹ “UNCTAD’S Programme Budget and Financing of Technical Cooperation Activities | UNCTAD.” n.d. Unctad.org. Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://unctad.org/page/unctads-programme-budget-and-financing-technical-cooperation-activities#:~:text=Technical%20Cooperation%20Activities-;> UNCTAD. 2019. “General Assembly Proposed Programme Budget for 2020 Programme Planning Proposed Programme Budget for 2020 Part IV International Cooperation for Development Section 12 Trade and Development Programme 10 Trade and Development.” https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/a64d6section12_en.pdf.

¹² United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. 2021. “Trade and Development Board.” https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/wpd311_en.pdf

¹³ UNCTAD SECRETARIAT. 2006. “UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE on TRADE and DEVELOPMENT UNCTAD: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW.”

¹⁴ UNCTAD SECRETARIAT. 2006. “UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE on TRADE and DEVELOPMENT UNCTAD: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW.”

¹⁵ UNCTAD SECRETARIAT. 2006. “UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE on TRADE and DEVELOPMENT UNCTAD: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW.”

¹⁶ UNCTAD SECRETARIAT. 2006. “UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE on TRADE and DEVELOPMENT UNCTAD: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW.”

¹⁷ UNCTAD SECRETARIAT. 2006. “UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE on TRADE and DEVELOPMENT UNCTAD: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW.”

¹⁸ “History.” United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://unctad.org/about/history#>.

¹⁹ “History.” United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

²⁰ “History.” United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

²¹ “History.” United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

²² Raghavan, Chakravarthi. “Third World Network Berhad.” From Washington Consensus to Bangkok Convergence. TWN. Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://www.twn.my/title/twr116a.htm>.

causes of the Great Recession, publishing statistics and data surrounding the global economy, and creating solutions to the Great Recession, as well as following up with new solutions, responses and data in 2010.^{23, 24}

In 2020, as the COVID-19 affected the international community, UNCTAD published statistics about changes in the global economy, highlighting changes in local economic climates, import and export statistics, supply chain disruptions and immigration, much like their action during the Great Recession of 2008 and 2009.²⁵ UNCTAD also published policy recommendations to resume original levels of international cooperation.²⁶ As COVID-19 brought a surge in online trading and commerce, UNCTAD also shifted focus toward the digital realm in regard to global trade, publishing studies and analyses of e-commerce and inequalities created by the rise in online trade, as well as advice for government and corporate bodies when dealing with economic recovery.²⁷ UNCTAD also published data regarding specific Member States' responses to COVID, highlighting risk factors in employment, inflation, health-related economic issues as well as consumer actions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁸

Currently, UNCTAD operates jointly with the UNWTO to ensure international trade follows the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, of which the UNCTAD has contributed 10 out of 17 goals.²⁹ UNCTAD and UNWTO also work together to ensure the integration of least developed countries (LDCs), into international trade.³⁰ On April 16, 2013, UNCTAD and the UNWTO signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) as an effort to officially designate areas of jurisdiction for both committees.³¹ This partnership through the MoU has yielded many joint efforts, with policies including The Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance as well as the Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme.³² The UNCTAD also serves as an observer organization to the Standards and Trade Development Facility, which allows collaboration between both organizations for various projects which focus on reducing poverty, animal rights in trade, food security and sustainable economic development.^{33, 34}

²³ "The Global Economic Crisis: Systematic Failures and Multilateral Remedies." UNCTAD, 2009. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Accessed February 22, 2022. https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/gds20091_en.pdf.

²⁴ "The Financial and Economic Crisis of 2008-2009 and Developing Countries." UNCTAD, December 2010. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft Berlin. https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/gdsmdp20101_en.pdf

²⁵ "Policy Brief No. 93." *Emerging Strategies for Ports during the Pandemic*. UNCTAD, February 2022. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/presspb2022d1_en.pdf.

²⁶ "Policy Brief No. 93." *Emerging Strategies for Ports during the Pandemic*. UNCTAD.

²⁷ Sirimanne, Shamika N. "Covid-19 and e-Commerce: A Global Review." UNCTAD. Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://unctad.org/es/node/32378>.

²⁸ "Economic and Social Impact of COVID-19 in Angola 2021." UNCTAD, 2022. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/aldcinf2021d6_en.pdf.

²⁹ "The WTO and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development." World Trade Organization. WTO. Accessed February 22, 2022. https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/coher_e/wto_unctad_e.htm.

³⁰ "The WTO and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development." World Trade Organization.

³¹ "The WTO and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development." World Trade Organization.

³² "The WTO and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development." World Trade Organization.

³³ "The WTO and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development." World Trade Organization.

³⁴ "Standards and Trade Development Facility Home Page." Standards and Trade Development Facility. STDF. Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://www.standardsfacility.org/>.

I. Enhancing the Global Response to Food Insecurity in Conflict

"Hundreds of millions of people on the poverty line have been crushed by this [global food] crisis — informal workers who are mainly women; small holder farmers; micro and small business owners; people with disabilities... We cannot accept mass hunger and starvation in the 21st century."

– United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres.³⁵

Introduction

The United Nations' (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) identified food security exists "when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."³⁶ Food security has been outlined into four dimensions: food availability, food access, food use and utilization, and food stability.³⁷ Food insecurity, however, are situations that exists when there's a scarce access to adequate quantities of nutritious and safe food for the purpose of normal development, growth, and a healthy life.³⁸ Food insecurity can exist "by the unavailability of food, insufficient purchasing power, inappropriate distribution or inadequate use of food at the household level. Food insecurity can be long-term, seasonal, or temporary."³⁹ Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) documented approximately 795 million people were undernourished.⁴⁰ The majority of the aforementioned undernourished, which equated to every ninth person, have lived in developing Member States and rural areas.⁴¹

Historically, but with a renewed focus since the start of the 21st century, providing "sufficient, safe, and nutritious" food to all populations has been a main concern for the international community.⁴² There are both short-term and long-term effects of food insecurity. The obvious impacts include the well-being and loss of human lives.⁴³ Food insecurity's impacts have an economic effect. According to an UNCTAD report in 2017, malnourished people are less productive, and children, including 90 million under five years old, are very likely to have zero to little education due to hunger.⁴⁴ Among the younger populations, the lack of food could result in "less capable adults."⁴⁵

Recent years have seen food insecurity heighten for a variety of reasons. In a statement from UN Secretary-General António Guterres, the world is facing an "unprecedented global hunger crisis" that has exacerbated due to climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and drought at the Horn of Africa.⁴⁶ An increase of famines is

³⁵ "Secretary-General Warns of Unprecedented Global Hunger Crisis, with 276 Million Facing Food Insecurity, Calling for Export Recovery, Debt Relief," *United Nations*, June 24, 2022, <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sgsm21350.doc.htm>

³⁶ "The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation in Ensuring Food Security by 2030," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 2017, https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/dtlstict2017d5_en.pdf

³⁷ "The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation in Ensuring Food Security by 2030," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

³⁸ "The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation in Ensuring Food Security by 2030," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

³⁹ "The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation in Ensuring Food Security by 2030," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁴⁰ "The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation in Ensuring Food Security by 2030," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁴¹ "The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation in Ensuring Food Security by 2030," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁴² "The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation in Ensuring Food Security by 2030," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁴³ "The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation in Ensuring Food Security by 2030," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁴⁴ "The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation in Ensuring Food Security by 2030," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁴⁵ "The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation in Ensuring Food Security by 2030," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁴⁶ "Secretary-General Warns of Unprecedented Global Hunger Crisis, with 276 Million Facing Food Insecurity, Calling for Export Recovery, Debt Relief," *United Nations*, accessed August 1, 2022, <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sgsm21350.doc.htm>

expected to be declared during 2022 and 2023 could be worse.⁴⁷ Secretary-General Guterres acknowledged that if the international community doesn't act to tackle food insecurity then the current "dangerous situation could turn into a catastrophe."⁴⁸

History

UNCTAD has been talking about food insecurity since its inaugural year. During 1964's opening statements, the then-representative for Cuba, Ernesto Guevara Serna, stressed that the world is hungry, but that same world doesn't have the money to purchase food.⁴⁹ The then-French minister for finance and economic affairs, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, observed that there was progress regarding food demand following the conclusion of World War II, but new Member States were encountering "serious obstacles" because of trade restrictions and fluctuations of both demand and costs for food and commodities.⁵⁰ Giscard D'Estaing also noted that many of the world's populations weren't able to afford the "necessary minimum of food."⁵¹

Four years later, food insecurity remained among the pressing topics for UNCTAD members. The Republic of China said it was "imperative" for developing Member States to collaborate together to address the global food problem, particularly endorsing improvements in agricultural resources in addition to reducing dependency from the developed Member States.⁵² The representative for Indonesia, in 1968, called for UNCTAD and its members to dedicate attention to food insecurity as it had a "significant bearing on economic growth" for the developing Member States and inaction could enflame a serious crisis.⁵³ The Indonesian representative continued that financial and technical aid for developing Member States should increase but these same developing Member States ought to still develop their own programs to increase food production.⁵⁴ The representative for the Netherlands echoed Indonesia, stating developed Member States must intensify technical aid for the developing Member States but the latter should increase their own efforts.⁵⁵ A consistent theme among representatives in both 1964 and 1968 conferences were calls for improved trade agreements, including regional-level treaties.

Stepping into the 21st century, UNCTAD admitted its mission to address food insecurity and commodities was sidelined since the 1980s.⁵⁶ The admission came as UNCTAD recognized a rapid rise in food costs, which concerned many Member States.⁵⁷ Then-UNCTAD Secretary-General Mukhisa Kituyi called for a renewed multilateral focus to combat global threats that included a food crisis.⁵⁸ UNCTAD also saw a wake-up call during the 2008 financial crisis, which included a global food crisis. Between 2007-2009, 98 percent of the world's undernourished were in developing Member States, and two-thirds of those populations were in seven Member States: Bangladesh, the People's Republic of China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, and Pakistan.⁵⁹ A 2008 UNCTAD report acknowledged the global food crisis emerged from

⁴⁷ "Secretary-General Warns of Unprecedented Global Hunger Crisis, with 276 Million Facing Food Insecurity, Calling for Export Recovery, Debt Relief," *United Nations*.

⁴⁸ "Secretary-General Warns of Unprecedented Global Hunger Crisis, with 276 Million Facing Food Insecurity, Calling for Export Recovery, Debt Relief," *United Nations*.

⁴⁹ "Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 1964, https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/econf46d141vol2_en.pdf

⁵⁰ "Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁵¹ "Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁵² "Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development: Second Session," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 1968, https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/td97vol1_en.pdf

⁵³ "Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development: Second Session," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁵⁴ "Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development: Second Session," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁵⁵ "Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development: Second Session," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁵⁶ "UNCTAD at 50: A Short History," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 2014, https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/osg2014d1_en.pdf

⁵⁷ "UNCTAD at 50: A Short History," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁵⁸ "UNCTAD at 50: A Short History," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁵⁹ "Poverty and Food Crisis," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 2012,

“unprecedented” food price increases and food stock shortages, especially affecting developing Member States and their low-income populations.⁶⁰ The global food crisis infringed on an important human right: to be free from hunger and malnutrition.⁶¹ As a result, UNCTAD recommended trade, investment, and agriculture policies across national, regional, and international levels.⁶² The recommended policies included:

- *"Strengthen food procurement systems and mechanisms, at national, regional and potentially global level, to reduce transaction costs, including those related to importing food and financing purchases from abroad.*
- *Promote appropriate financial tools and regulations to develop the food sector and minimize speculation in commodity markets and futures trading.*
- *Ensure that emergency food assistance is provided in a manner that does not undermine local food production, by causing market disincentives.*
- *Enhance developing countries' production and post-harvest capacities in the food and agriculture sector, including through the promotion of (a) national commodity policies; (b) investments and financing in agriculture production and infrastructure (transport networks, cold chains and food storage etc.); and (c) the strengthening of food and agricultural production and distribution systems and support institutions.*
- *Enhance South-South cooperation, including trade cooperation, and South-South triangular cooperation through specific instruments for addressing food security needs and promoting agriculture development.*
- *Improve decision-making on the choice of technological interventions directed at addressing the global food crisis through better and more extensive information and the active involvement of beneficiaries.*
- *Develop and implement competition policies to ensure that developing countries, including their small-scale producers, can be integrated into the global agriculture and food commodity value chain in a way that is more equitable, and that will help to stimulate domestic production while safeguarding consumer welfare.*
- *Ensure that the trends in food production, trade and consumption are made more equitable and beneficial for women and girls."*⁶³

Current Situation

UNCTAD's food insecurity mission evolved in recent years as the organization faced international conflicts. While the global food crisis of 2008 began to ease, the African continent still encountered issues. In UNCTAD's TD/B/EX(47)/3 in 2009, the cost of essential food was above the average rates and more than 300 million African faced long-term hunger.⁶⁴ UNCTAD recognized certain measures to help mitigate the continent's crisis through refining farmers' procedures to inputs and credit, increasing agricultural research services, and providing crucial

<https://stats.unctad.org/Dgff2012/chapter4/4.2.html>

⁶⁰ "Addressing The Global Food Crisis: Key trade, investment and commodity policies in ensuring sustainable food security and alleviating poverty," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 2008, https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/osg20081_en.pdf

⁶¹ "Addressing The Global Food Crisis: Key trade, investment and commodity policies in ensuring sustainable food security and alleviating poverty," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁶² "Addressing The Global Food Crisis: Key trade, investment and commodity policies in ensuring sustainable food security and alleviating poverty," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁶³ "Addressing The Global Food Crisis: Key trade, investment and commodity policies in ensuring sustainable food security and alleviating poverty," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁶⁴ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, *Food security in Africa: learning lessons from the food crisis*, TD/B/EX(47)/3, April 21, 2009, https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tdbex47d3_en.pdf

infrastructure.⁶⁵ By 2022, strife, in addition to climate disruption, continued to dent food security progress. East Africa has faced a drought, namely impacting Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, resulting in the fourth-consecutive below-average rainfall season.⁶⁶ South Sudan, however, has experienced its significant flooding for the fourth consecutive year, and it has affected crops and livestock.⁶⁷ According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, and South Sudan are among UN Member States with populations at risk of starvation and death.⁶⁸ Taking into account only Ethiopia, 400,000 people from the Tigray region are at risk of starvation – the highest number on record since Somalia's famine in 2011.⁶⁹ Western African Member States such as Benin, Cabo Verde, and Guinea are also at risk of food insecurity.⁷⁰

The FAO noted an additional cause of Africa's food insecurity has been the war in Ukraine.⁷¹ Following the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, food and fuel prices skyrocketed across many parts of the world.⁷² Least-developed countries, or LDCs, in Africa have heavily relied on both Russia and Ukraine for wheat.⁷³ The African continent imported USD 3.7 Billion worth of wheat from Russia and USD 1.4 Billion from Ukraine between 2018 and 2020.⁷⁴ UNCTAD has projected North and East Africa could encounter the brunt of the food insecurity crisis brought forth by the Russia-Ukraine war.⁷⁵ The North and East Africa regions have been struggling with food insecurity and other import options are limited.⁷⁶

Imports of wheat, barley, colza, corn, seeds, and sunflower oil have also made harmful impacts outside of Africa.⁷⁷ For example, China, India, and Turkey have heavily relied on the aforementioned products, mostly from Russia.⁷⁸ Security concerns and travel restrictions have complicated trade routes, resulting in rising cargo costs, longer travel routes, and higher fuel prices.⁷⁹ UNCTAD reported that the low-income populations will face "adverse distributional impacts" from the Russia-Ukraine war.⁸⁰ Developed Member States have also faced higher inflation rates, increasing interest rates, and a burden to constrict financial policies.⁸¹ UNCTAD's rapid assessment report of the war's trade and development impacts stated, "The combination of very high prices of food and fuel and macroeconomic tightening will place severe pressure on households in developing countries: real incomes will be squeezed, and economic growth will be constrained. Even in the absence of disorderly moves in financial markets, developing economies will face severe constraints on growth and development."⁸²

⁶⁵ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, *Food security in Africa: learning lessons from the food crisis*.

⁶⁶ "FAO and WFP warn of looming widespread food crisis as hunger threatens stability in dozens of countries," *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*, June 6, 2022, <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-and-wfp-warn-of-looming-widespread-food-crisis-as-hunger-threatens-stability-in-dozens-of-countries/en>

⁶⁷ "FAO and WFP warn of looming widespread food crisis as hunger threatens stability in dozens of countries," *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*.

⁶⁸ "FAO and WFP warn of looming widespread food crisis as hunger threatens stability in dozens of countries," *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*.

⁶⁹ "FAO and WFP warn of looming widespread food crisis as hunger threatens stability in dozens of countries," *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*.

⁷⁰ "FAO and WFP warn of looming widespread food crisis as hunger threatens stability in dozens of countries," *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*.

⁷¹ "FAO and WFP warn of looming widespread food crisis as hunger threatens stability in dozens of countries," *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*.

⁷² "FAO and WFP warn of looming widespread food crisis as hunger threatens stability in dozens of countries," *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*.

⁷³ "The Impact on Trade and Development of the War in Ukraine," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, March 16, 2022, https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/osginf2022d1_en.pdf

⁷⁴ "The Impact on Trade and Development of the War in Ukraine," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁷⁵ "The Impact on Trade and Development of the War in Ukraine," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁷⁶ "The Impact on Trade and Development of the War in Ukraine," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁷⁷ "The Impact on Trade and Development of the War in Ukraine," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁷⁸ "The Impact on Trade and Development of the War in Ukraine," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁷⁹ "The Impact on Trade and Development of the War in Ukraine," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁸⁰ "The Impact on Trade and Development of the War in Ukraine," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁸¹ "The Impact on Trade and Development of the War in Ukraine," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁸² "The Impact on Trade and Development of the War in Ukraine," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

According to UNCTAD, 1.2 billion people across the globe are vulnerable to the Russia-Ukraine war's impact on food, energy, and finance.⁸³ In June 2022, current UNCTAD Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan said the ongoing food crisis "may rapidly turn into a food catastrophe of global proportions in 2023."⁸⁴ Grynspan added, "If the war continues and grain and fertilizer high prices persist into the next planting season, the present crisis could extend...to other basic foods such as rice, that will affect, as we all know, billions more people. And finally let me underline that this is a global crisis which nobody can escape. But let me also emphasize that the vulnerable are already suffering the most."⁸⁵ Grynspan noted ten percent increase in food prices represents a five percent decrease in lowest-income families, a figure that could affect their expenditures for medical needs.⁸⁶ Grynspan called for the stabilization of global markets, the reduction of volatility, the need to address commodity costs, and for the Group of 20 (G20) to improve debt programs for Member States in need of relief.⁸⁷ She said the global food crisis must include the reintegration of Ukraine's food production and Russia's respective food and fertilizer production.⁸⁸

Conclusion

For UNCTAD, food insecurity has been a topic of discussion since its inception more than 50 years ago. In its early years, representatives acknowledged that developing Member States need the resources to meet their respective populations' demand for food. Many of those representatives, however, were also direct that the developing Member States should also take initiative, domestically and regionally. By 2022, the food crisis has evolved and involves discussions of wars, climate change, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Regions have or continue to brace persistent weather conditions, from floods to droughts. Conflicts, whether civil or among multiple Member States, have also impacted food supplies. The global response is complex and multilayered. UNCTAD has recognized the need for national, regional, and international level approaches, which may call on reforming existing trade agreements.

Committee Directive

Delegates have a multifaceted task in preparation to address this topic. Understanding your Member State's own food insecurity issues is important, and it does exist among developed Member States. What has your Member State done to domestically address food insecurity? What programs were established, and did it include partnerships with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or intergovernmental organizations (IGOs)? Were there innovations that could carry over onto a regional or international level? How will technology help ensure food security? What are some of the trade policies that have hindered or improved food security? Delegates should identify how climate change may have affected food supplies domestically or in participating programs. In addition, how has war, including the Russia-Ukraine conflict, affected your Member State? The COVID-19 pandemic has not dissolved, therefore, how has it affected food security? What was your Member State's response and actions in addressing the conflicts and easing food and financial disruptions?

⁸³ "War in Ukraine threatens to unleash 'unprecedented wave' of global hunger and destitution," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, June 8, 2022,

<https://unctad.org/news/war-ukraine-threatens-unleash-unprecedented-wave-global-hunger-and-destitution>

⁸⁴ War in Ukraine threatens to unleash 'unprecedented wave' of global hunger and destitution," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁸⁵ "Statement by Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of UNCTAD: Launch of the second report by the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, June 8, 2022,

<https://unctad.org/osgstatement/launch-second-report-of-global-crisis-response-group>

⁸⁶ "Statement by Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of UNCTAD: Launch of the second report by the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁸⁷ "Statement by Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of UNCTAD: Launch of the second report by the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

⁸⁸ "Statement by Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of UNCTAD: Launch of the second report by the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.