

A close-up photograph of a person's hand reaching down towards a stalk of wheat in a field. The hand is positioned in the upper left, with fingers gently touching the wheat. The background is a vast field of golden wheat under a warm, hazy sky, creating a sense of peace and connection to nature.

General Assembly 3

Ensuring Food Security in Food Conflict Zones



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Introduction

The international community acknowledges food as a basic human right that all people should have the availability to undergo, therefore, it is important to ensure food security in conflict zones. In the 1996 World Food Summit, food security is defined as “When all people at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”. Food security is made up of four main dimensions: physical availability of food, economic and physical access to food, food utilization and stability. A multitude of factors can affect a nation's ability to provide its citizens with food security, some being agricultural land and significant infrastructure being deteriorated by fighting. When nations are involved in conflicts it can create economic and agricultural conditions in which food security in conflict zones is not provided. An example of these factors are trade routes being closed off and the collapse of local markets due to insecurity. The International Humanitarian Law (IHL) prohibits the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare and gives protection to resources necessary to produce food and drinking water. Consequently, it is necessary to come to a conclusion or proposal on how food security in conflict zones should be kept.

Definition of Key Terms

Food Security

As defined by the WFS, “When all people at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”



Physical availability of food

Physical availability of food ensures the supply side of food and is measured by the level of food production, stock levels and net trade.

Economic and physical access to food

The accepted national and international level of food supplied does not always guarantee a household's access to food security. When insufficient levels of food are available then governments will often retaliate with a greater policy focus on incomes, expenditure, markets, and prices in achieving food security.

Food Utilization

Utilization is accepted as the method by which the body consumes various nutrients in food. Good care and eating practices, food preparation, diversity of diet and intra-household distribution of food are outcomes of satisfactory nutrient and energy intake. Nutritional status is also composed of the biological utilization of food consumed.

Stability

Stability measures the physical availability of food, economic and physical access to food and food utilization over time. An individual is considered to be food insecure if they do not have sufficient access to food on an intermittent basis. This causes them to have a deprecating nutritional status. Factors that can create food insecurity are adverse weather conditions, political instability and/or economic factors. Said economic factors can include unemployment and/or high inflation levels.

Super Wheat

“Super” varieties of wheat are unaffected by deadly stem rusts. They could replace wheat that is affected by the disease in two years. The new breed of wheat is viewed as a possible solution to food security in the East African region, in which crops often do not last until full harvest.



General Overview

History of food security

The Importance of food security was first scrutinized after World War II (WWII). This was due to the global communities' unfavourable experience with war rationing and shortages. This was owed to crops and agricultural land being demolished during active conflict, leading to thousands of people starving to death. As a result of unstable post-WWII international politics and trade relations, many nations were pushed to increase their self-sufficiency in food production in order to escape the supply problems that they were experiencing. Self-sufficiency meant that nations were producing agriculture locally, this often lead to a scarcity of raw materials in nations with low natural capital, destabilizing food security once again.

The increase in nations' demand for self-sufficiency acted as a jump-start for the "Green Revolution". The green revolution was the second agricultural revolution. It increased the revenue of industrialized nations from 1945-1970. Both More Economically Developed Countries (MEDC) and Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDC) experienced agricultural production development by creating new crop varieties. This included crops such as wheat (with the creation of super wheat), rice and maize. Nations also encountered an increase in the use of pesticides and oil-based fertilizers combined with mechanisation. However, the increased use of pesticides would prove to be detrimental to the ecosystem in the upcoming years. The term green revolution was first used by former USAID director, William Gaud, he described it as, "The development in the field of agriculture containing the making of a new revolution". The green revolution would then lead a variety of nations to the opportunity to provide their citizens with food security as self-sufficient agricultural production increased.

The creation of Super Wheat originated in Mexico in 1943. During and straight after WWII Mexico was in a state in which it needed to import half the wheat it consumed from other nations in order to sustain its population. In 1956 things began shifting as Mexico underwent their own green revolution, and by 1964 they were exporting half a million tons of wheat internationally. American, Norman Borlaug, played a pivotal role in the creation of semi-dwarf, high-yield, disease-resistant breeding of super wheat in Mexico. Through the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT), hosted in 1964, he was able to publish super wheat and make it available to consumption by farmers. Borlaug spent a decade, beginning in 1944, working on breeds of wheat that were able to repel diseases and created 6,000 individual crossings. An important step for



Borlaug was creating wheat with less chaff, meaning that more of the product was digestible for humans and more of the wheat could be sold on the market. The principal success of this breeding of wheat production was that the new seed was able to grow in a variety of climates. 18,000 tons of super wheat were exported from Mexico to India in 1966, by 1968 a record 16.5 million tons of wheat were harvested. This allowed the production of wheat in India to become self-sufficient. Meaning there was a substantial increase in food security in India. The same success soon followed in Pakistan when super wheat was also exported there. Food security was also increased in the United Kingdom (UK) when super wheat was used between 1964-1980 to increase self-sufficiency in production from 30% to 80%. This also allowed the UK to become a net exporter of grains.

In 1970 Norman Borlaug won a Nobel peace prize for helping nations progress their food security. In his speech, he addressed a lot of today's issues, "The green revolution has won a temporary success in man's war against hunger and deprivation; it has given man a breathing space. If fully implemented, the revolution can provide sufficient food for sustenance during the next three decades" However he also includes that not everyone was able to gain something from the green revolution and that world hunger is still a prevalent issue. He quotes, "Perhaps the term the green revolution is premature, too optimistic or too broad in scope. Too often it seems to convey the impression of a general revolution in yields per hectare and in total production of all crops throughout vast areas compromising many countries". Contrasting the belief that the green revolution was an extremely positive solution to food security we have seen in the past that ecologists began to question the sustainability of the chemicals being used to enhance crops. They criticised the large amounts of chemicals being used in the soil. These chemicals decrease soil fertility, decrease genetic diversity and increase soil erosion and long-term vulnerability to pests. All of these issues could very possibly be a future obstacle to maintaining or achieving food security. Sociologists and economists have also believed that the benefits of the green revolution were not equally distributed seeing that it leads to rural impoverishment, increased debt, social inequity and displacement of vast numbers of peasant farmers. Many scholars build on economist, Thomas Robert Malthus's, theory on the connection between population growth and the difficulty ensuring food security. They believe that food insecurity could be a result of the unavailability of food, insufficient purchasing power, improper distribution and improper use of food. Poverty, natural catastrophes, political violence and geopolitical factors may also act as a factor in the disproportionate distribution of food globally.

Conflict and food insecurity



Active and post-conflict zones have brought malnutrition and hunger to a variety of nations. In 1997, thirty-three armed conflicts in twenty-six locations around the world (twenty-one being classified as “major conflicts”) brought over 1,000 deaths. Due to the violence tens of millions of people were put at risk for hunger and malnutrition. This included 14 million refugees, 31 million internally displaced persons (IDP) within their own countries and an unknown amount of people trapped within conflict zones. While in 1988 seven million people were left in need of food and other humanitarian assistance due to active conflict.

Neighbouring nations’ food security is also affected by internal conflicts due to conflict zones spilling across borders, disruptions in regional industries and markets, or conflicts forcing out refugees in need of food, water and fuel. For example, refugees who fled active combat in the North of Chad (1983-1985) created a “famine that kills”.

The conscious act of using food as a weapon of manipulation, terror and power is one of the principal ways in which conflict can lead to insecure food stability. A method in which this can occur is when oppositional forces create food shortages and famine deaths when initiating an obstruction of food supplies and limiting the output of an economy's agricultural sector, causing their opposition to starve so that they are coerced into submission. Maneuvres to create a food shortage are the unjust embezzlement of food aid performed by militaries and/or supporters, eradication of food stocks, livestock and any other resource needed in agricultural regions, restriction of food supplies, economic sanctions, and benefactor policies that deny food aid.

An example of a body of people exploiting a nation's starvation to gain total control of the population was in Southern Sudan (before South Sudan gained independence). In this scenario, both government and rebel forces manipulated famine to control the territory and people. The government, and rebel forces, selectively chose who would receive food based on ethnicity and religious identity. By 1998 this act would cause 2.4 million people to require emergency food assistance. Rwandan Hutu refugees were also believed to use food distribution in refugee camps to maintain political power. Food given by charities meant for liable women and children were often found in the hands of powerful men instead. Allowing any possible require defenceless due to malnutrition.

Not only does conflict directly withhold food from a population but it can also decrease farming populations through blunt intrusions, terror, enslavement, conscription, malnutrition, illness and death. When farmers are forced to seek refuge outside of their nation or seek other employment out of fear, farming production tends to have a rapid decline meaning that food security and



malnutrition further spread throughout the nation. Another manner in which conflict can have long-term effects on food shortages is through the use of land mining and the poisoning of wells. If agricultural land goes through any of these violent tactics the land becomes unusable meaning that any food production or economic output is terminated. Active combat causing food shortages establishes a level of long-term food instability for a nation (even if conflict stops). Inescapably, rural crop rotations and food supply will also change as agricultural industries are destroyed by conflict. Rural food instability will proportionally increase as local food production cannot reach the demand needed to replace market food sources and feed populations as they increase with higher refugee numbers. Pastoralists find grazing land unattainable or disintegrated.

Militias are often key factors of food insecurity. Historically, we have often seen militias remove populations of key resources to maintain power and domination. This is often done with the seizing of land, livestock, and newly discovered oil (in the case of the Dinka ethnic group in south-central Sudan). By restricting civilians of key resources and engineering food shortages populations will find themselves increasingly impoverished, malnourished from deprecating markets and households will lack fundamental materials. The restriction of resources establishes acute food shortages in years of crop failure, further increasing populations' vulnerability and submissiveness to the party in control.

Conflict will also destroy industrial and market areas, disrupting trading routes, evading access to job opportunities, and increasing financial crisis by advancing unemployment rates. The decrease in livestock (caused by conflict or militias killing them) causes farmers to lose money due to the decrease in manure and animal traction, meaning they won't be able to produce as much as factors of production increase in price.

A detrimental effect of active combat is the depreciation of health care and social service institutions, these results will cause an increased risk of illness and malnutrition, increasing the demand for emergency food rations. When limited emergency food rations reach those in need they are often still left with unbalanced and insufficient nutrition. Civilians in combat zones often depend on depreciating markets, and with a financial crisis in the mix, they are often unable to meet nutritional requirements. Refugee populations are increasingly vulnerable to nutritional deprivation, health problems and violence in crowded and unhygienic emergency camps. Women and children will often be the main targets of these conditions. Men with weapons will often exploit fear and withhold humanitarian food aid from women and children. Due to children being at higher risk of abuse in conflict zones, malnutrition and malnutrition-related diseases and deaths continue even



after conflicts have ended because of the long-term effects they face due to abuse and poor health services.

Major Parties Involved

World Bank Group (WBG)

The World Bank Group has provided 69 countries with food security interventions and a fund of 26 billion dollars for long and short-term solutions to world hunger. They also provide 22 nations (out of the 24 nations declared as countries with the most immediate need for help to ensure food security) with active interventions.

United Nations Food Programme (WFP)

The WF is the world's largest humanitarian organisation. They focus on finding ways to bring food assistance to nations to promote peace, stability and prosperity for people who have had to experience conflicts, disasters and the impacts of climate change. They have provided 160 million people food security assistance and are credited with providing 20 million children nutritious school and home meals.

Ukraine

Ukraine acts as one of the primary wheat exporters in the world. The main countries to which they export to are, Ethiopia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, Kenya and Djibouti. They also provide mainly European countries with basic cooking necessities, such as sunflower seeds and oil. Due to the enduring conflict between Russia and Ukraine, many nations have been left with unpredictable food security. Currently, about 25-35% of Ukraine's agricultural land is being occupied by Russia. Further adding to insecure food security.

Russia

Russia is the world's largest exporter; in 2021 they were recorded to provide 24% of the world's population with wheat. Russia is known as the "breadbasket of Europe" and due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, rumours of a global food crisis have increased.

Black Sea Region



The Black Sea region acts as a crucial trading route for grains exported from Ukraine and Russia. In the past (and currently) when conflicts or tensions rise in the Black Sea Region food security can become unstable due to routes being blocked. On the 22nd of July in 2022 Russian and Ukrainian officials signed the Black Sea Grain Initiative in Istanbul, Turkey. This agreement (which was supervised by the UN) allowed for Ukraine's exported grain's safety to be insured if they were to pass from the ports, CHornomorsk, Odesa and Yuzhny/Pivdennyi. The food being exported allowed for more prominent food security, however, it is still not fully insured that the agreement will remain successful.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of event
1943	Super wheat is first introduced in Mexico Green Revolution initiated
1960	The United Nations Food Programme (WFP) is initiated as an experiment to attempt to provide food security globally. Later it would become the largest humanitarian group that is striving to end world hunger
1961	
1964	Super wheat is exported to India, pushing forward the Green Revolution
1993	International Food Security Treaty (IFST) campaign is initiated to promote the implementation of the four principles of food security in international laws.
13th-17th November 1996	The Rome Declaration on World Food Security is created by the World Food Security at the World Food Summit in Rome, Italy. The treaty's goal was to end World Hunger by 2015, 185 countries and the European Community ratified the treaty.

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, 16 November 1974 (3180 (XXVIII))



- International Food Security Treaty (IFST), 1993
- Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Security Plan of Action: World Food Summit, 13-17 November 1996
- Resolution 2417, 2018 (S/RES/2417)
- World Food Summit, (Rome) Italy, 10-13 June 2002
- Food security and self-sufficiency in North Africa, 1995 (E/ECA/CM/21/RES/805(XXX))

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

The global community has attempted to provide food security in conflict zones for a multitude of decades, however, they often encounter the same obstacles. In 1990 humanitarian assistance began to focus on how to transport food into active conflict zones in order to eradicate death by famine. They failed to find a way to transport the food without other parties hijacking the food aid intended for civilians. Opposing groups will often hijack food aid in order to starve out opponents and keep the conflict alive.

Organizations such as the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) work to provide food security and potable water in conflict zones. Their program focuses on linking food relief with longer-term development and creating new sectors of work/entrepreneurial skills through training or microcredit. They will pay their workers with food, much like Food-for-Work (FFW) or income-generation projects. However, in programs such as the FFW which work in active conflict or post-conflict zones, it is extremely difficult to provide efficient planning, implementation and evaluation due to poor infrastructure that often plagues nations in conflict. Without these basic infrastructures it is extremely difficult for organizations to negotiate labour contracts and food distribution.

Charities have also tried to provide help for malnourished communities by focusing on providing food in refugee camps. They also keep detail on specific foods that women and children might necessitate. The dilemma for these charities is determining whether the food they have donated has actually reached the correct recipients. Seeing that refugee camps often have an



increased vulnerability to conflicts it is typical for food to be taken away from women and children by the party in control. Some critics believe that there should be a method implemented in order to directly deliver food aid to women, seeing that they are also statistically more likely to feed children.

Possible Solutions

Laws should be created, implemented and agreed upon in order to protect agricultural land and trading routes during conflicts. If agricultural land is to be demolished during active combat a nation completely loses its ability to self-sustain its food security. If financial crises are present due to war costs then it is crucial that agricultural land remains healthy. Not only does the destruction of agricultural land and trading routes affect the nation with conflict, but it also negatively affects any nation that is importing food from this nation. Possibly risking a global food security crisis. Therefore, delegates should implement a system to protect agricultural land and trading routes.

The transportation of food provided by an organization or charity is in no way productive unless its arrival to the group in need of food aid is attained. Transporting and guarding emergency food supplies in conflict situations is a necessity. This could be done with the supervision of a Non-Government Organization (NGO) or non-bias party. Supervising could be done with cameras, security systems, or physical cooperation. This is needed in order to protect food aid from corrupt groups attempting to hijack said resources.

Another possible solution to ensuring food security in conflict zones is implementing a more sustainable yield of wheat to farmers in order to promote more effective and efficient agriculture. This would mean that more food is available to the population. However, if this system was to be adopted it would be necessary for an equitable distribution system to be created. In order to ensure that all parts of the population (in the conflict zones) are receiving food sources and that no group is being discriminated against based on ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc.

A possible solution to preventing government bodies from exploiting their political power and using famine to oppress an opposing group would be to establish an anti-corruption committee that would focus on investigating groups of people who are rumoured to be using famine as a weapon in conflict zones. This committee could target the removal of political powerlessness and economic destitution, and the intentional prevention of food towards specific households or individuals even when food is available. The struggle of this community would be finding solutions that do not (in the long run) allow for political unrest or conflicts to re-emerge.



Delegates should not only focus on finding a system to transport food aid to civilians but also on finding a system in order to rebuild the infrastructure of a nation in active conflict. Without proper infrastructure to communicate and organise the transportation of food, it is almost impossible to ensure food security. Post-conflict platforms in order to work on building back natural (agricultural) and social resources, households, and communities, regain land titles, reconstruct waterworks, replant trees and restore livelihoods by providing seeds, animals, and tools. It must also be recognised that laws should be created to coordinate previously hostile groups. Without the reconstruction of said things underproduction, poverty, malnutrition and the risk of conflict beginning again will not decrease.

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