



Topic A: Mitigating the Impact of Malnutrition and Health Emergencies in the Horn of Africa

WHO



 **LINMUN**

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I. INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates of the World Health Organization (WHO),

During this debate, you will discuss the current topic: **Mitigating the Impact of Malnutrition and Health Emergencies in the Horn of Africa.**

The Greater Horn of Africa (GHOA) accounted for 22% of the global humanitarian caseload in 2024. Emergencies in the GHOA account for food security, droughts, epidemics, armed conflict, floods and landslides, and displacement. The situation in the Greater Horn of Africa remains of high risk as resource scarcity and armed conflicts take place, deeming it necessary to take action in order to ensure food and health safety to the individuals in the Greater Horn of Africa.

The World Health Organization seeks great outcomes from the debate and its goal is to plan a reform regarding this topic.

Welcome to the Olinca Model United Nations (OLINMUN) 2026.

Yours sincerely,

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Head of Committee of WHO

Camila Barrientos Chavero

Chair of WHO

Felipe Torres Linares

Moderator of WHO

Luis Eduardo Colocía Mascott

Deputy Chair of WHO

NOTE: We highly recommend you thoroughly read the following document and the Delegate Handbook. We expect they will provide an overview of the topics discussed and allow you to acquire crucial information about the rules of procedure.

II. OVERVIEW

A. COMMITTEE'S BACKGROUND

The World Health Organization (WHO) oversees global health matters, providing technical assistance to countries and evaluating health crises. Within its main purposes we can find preventing the propagation of infectious diseases, looking forward to having good health conditions worldwide, and finding solutions regarding health deficiencies or problems. WHO has 194 Member States, which are in 6 different regions. Members of WHO must also be part of the United Nations and must have accepted its Charter which is firmly committed to the following:

- Health is a complete state of well-being socially, physically, and mentally, not only the absence of sickness.
- Health for all people is fundamental for keeping peace and security and it depends on the cooperation of individuals and States.
- The accomplishments of any State regarding protection of health are rewarding for every individual.
- The unequal development in different countries regarding promotion of health and sickness control, especially transmissible, is a common danger.
- Children's healthy development is very important, as well as living peacefully in a place in constant change is essential for its development.
- Governments are responsible for the health of people via sanitary and social measures.

B. COMMITTEE'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Since its founding in 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) has had various achievements with the objective of promoting health, keeping the world safe and serving the vulnerable; some of the most significant achievements WHO has had are:

- The reduction in Malaria Transmission
- The eradication of Smallpox
- The fight against Tropical Diseases
- Making Hepatitis C medication affordable
- Bringing yellow fever under control
- The management of the COVID-19 pandemic

Additionally, WHO established the first International Health Regulations which represents an agreement by WHO members to present and respond to public health issues that threaten people worldwide.

III. MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF MALNUTRITION AND HEALTH EMERGENCIES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

The crisis in the Greater Horn of Africa (GHoA)—which includes Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, and Uganda—is one of the most complex health emergencies in the world. Armed conflict, political instability, large-scale displacement, and one of the region's worst droughts in decades have intensified humanitarian needs. According to WHO (2025), the region continues to experience severe climate shocks, including El Niño, which further destabilize access to food, water, and healthcare.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA, 2024) reports that these overlapping challenges—including disease outbreaks, economic shocks, and environmental degradation—are “driving millions of people into displacement, acute food insecurity and malnutrition, public health emergencies, and destitution.” In Kenya, for example, the National Drought Management Authority (Concern Worldwide, 2025) confirmed that 20 out of 23 arid and semi-arid counties are facing worsening drought conditions, creating widespread crop failure and reducing access to food.

Across the GHoA, over 25 million people lack access to safe water, posing serious risks to public health. In 2024, one in four people in the region experienced high levels of acute food insecurity. In total, 64 million people required humanitarian assistance, representing nearly quarter of global needs. Since WHO declared the GHoA emergency in mid-2022, the number of people facing acute food insecurity increased from 38 million to 47.4 million (WHO, 2024).

Malnutrition is closely tied to worsening disease outbreaks. WHO (2024) reports increasing cases of cholera, measles, malaria, and dengue fever, exacerbated by conflict, population displacement, drought, and limited access to healthcare. Flooding in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya has accelerated water- and vector-borne diseases such as malaria and cholera. According to WHO, the number of reported disease outbreaks and climate-related health emergencies in the region has reached its highest point this century, prompting WHO to designate the crisis as a Grade 3 Emergency, the highest level of response.

WHO collaborates closely with UNICEF to deliver Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF), improve access to safe water and sanitation, and strengthen primary healthcare services. WHO is also supporting countries through enhanced disease surveillance, outbreak prevention, and rapid response mechanisms.

The organization's regional plan prioritizes:

1. Surveillance and data analysis;
2. Outbreak prevention and control;
3. Essential nutrition interventions;
4. Health service delivery; and
5. Cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration.

Despite limited improvements in parts of Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia, severe acute malnutrition (SAM) remains widespread. SAM rates are increasing in Sudan and South Sudan, where conflict and climate-related shocks continue to worsen.

The combined impact of climate disasters, protracted conflict, and escalating disease outbreaks is endangering millions of lives in the GHoA. Urgent, scaled-up, and coordinated action is required to prevent further deterioration and to protect vulnerable populations in the months ahead.

IV. KEY POINTS FOR DEBATE

1. Outcomes
 - a. Long-term consequences of malnutrition on children's physical and cognitive development.
 - b. Impacts of outbreaks (cholera, malaria, dengue) on communities in crisis.
2. Structural causes of the emergency
 - a. Prolonged droughts, climate shocks, and limited food production capacity.
 - b. The role of climate change and environmental degradation in worsening malnutrition.

3. Food security and nutrition
 - a. Rising cases of acute malnutrition (SAM) due to insufficient food supply.
 - b. Logistical challenges in distributing therapeutic foods to remote or conflict-affected areas.
4. Economic barriers
 - a. Financial constraints within local governments that limit health and nutrition programming.
5. Emergency Actions
 - a. Difficulties coordinating international aid due to conflict, infrastructure damage, and scale of need.
 - b. Strengthening health systems to prepare for future climate-related emergencies.

IV. ANNEXES

A. LIST OF COUNTRIES

1. Cambodia
2. Canada
3. China
4. Djibouti
5. Egypt
6. Eritrea
7. Ethiopia
8. Honduras
9. Japan
10. Kenya
11. Philippines
12. Russian Federation
13. Saudi Arabia
14. Somalia

15. South Sudan
16. Sri Lanka
17. Sudan
18. Sweden
19. Switzerland
20. Somalia
21. Uganda
22. United Kingdom
23. United States of America
24. Yemen

B. MAPS



Figure 1. Map of the Horn of Africa.

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