



**Forum:** Commission on the Right of Children  
**Question of:** Combating global malnutrition affecting children in areas of crisis  
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### **Description of the Issue**

The issue of malnutrition, also known as poor nutrition, is caused by many factors such as but not limited to not having enough food intake or not consuming food with the necessary nutrients the human body needs for survival, according to *Scotlands's National Health Information Service (NHS)*. The results of not being able to have a diet filled with enough nutrition include rapid weight and muscle loss, organ damage, a lower body mass index and vitamin as well as pressing mineral deficiencies. According to the *NHS*, all of these aspects can lead to serious health problems such as the inability to overcome illnesses and a general weakening of the human anatomy. But according to the *Save the Children Organization*, malnutrition can also lead to death.

“Areas of crisis” refers to geographic areas or specific regions dealing with serious issues or crises, such as wars, natural disasters, financial collapse, or healthcare emergencies. Due to the weakness of the current systems to handle these situations, they require rapid notice and assistance. Governments, international organizations, and humanitarian organizations must respond quickly to offer assistance, support, and long-term solutions. Examples include areas affected by armed conflict, disasters, economically struggling nations, and areas affected by large migration or public health crises (often LEDC’S). In order to reduce suffering and promote recovery and development, it is essential to recognize these crises and take appropriate action.

The reasoning on why malnutrition is such a pressing issue in LEDCs, especially affecting the children, is poverty. Due to the costs of fresh fruits and vegetables, people living in poverty tend to cheaper, less nutritious foods, as they have no other option. And to this day, 139 million children live in LEDCs, from which every 9 out of 10 children suffer under malnutrition. According to the *Save the Children Organization*, the number of chronic malnutrition is increasing day by day.



Acute food insecurity has reached unprecedented levels, affecting a record 349 million people from previously 135 million in 2019. More than 30 million children are acutely malnourished in 15 of the worst-affected countries.

The report also stated that the number of countries affected by high food prices increased from 16% in 2019 to 47% in 2020.

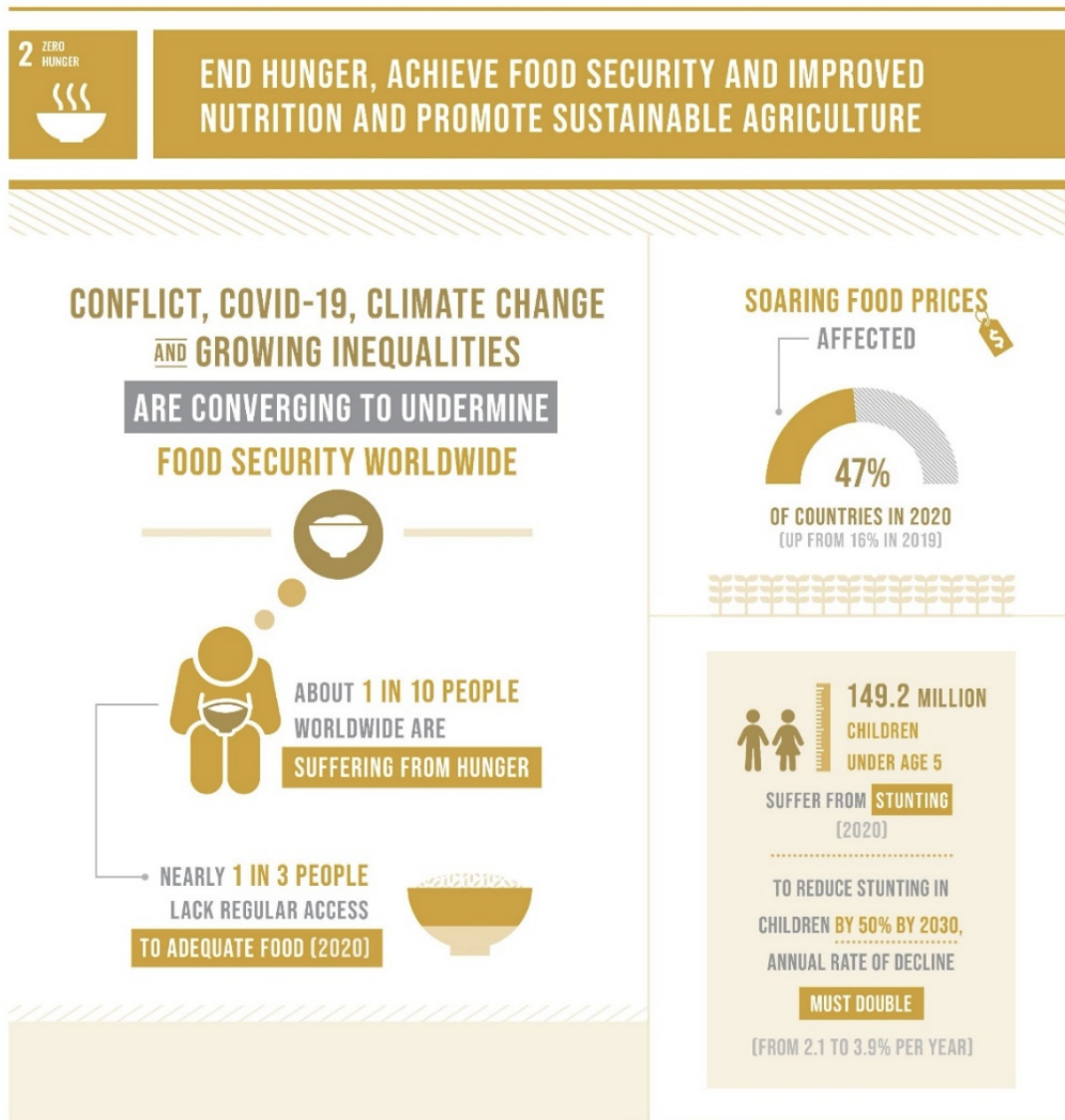


Figure 1: SDG 2 numbers and facts on hunger, 2020

Figure 1 showcases the second Sustainable Development Goal of the UN, which is a hunger free world by the end of 2030. 149.2 million children under the age of 5 were suffering from stunting, also called undernutrition associated with poor mental and physical state while 45.4 million were affected by wasting, which can be described as rapid weight loss due to malnutrition.



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The report also states, that the number of countries affected by high food prices increased from 16% in 2019 to 47% in 2020. Hunger is a significant global issue affecting millions of people.

According to the *Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations*, approximately 842 million people (one in eight individuals) suffer from undernourishment. The majority of the undernourished population, accounting for nearly two-thirds, resides in Asia, with the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China being the most affected regions. In Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, hunger is prevalent, and the proportion of people suffering from starvation in relation to the total population is the highest. Acute hunger often arises during natural disasters or conflicts, leading to temporary food crises and famine.

While progress has been made in combating hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean, an estimated 49 million people were undernourished in 2012. Surprisingly, even in developed countries, such as those in Europe, there are individuals who do not have access to adequate food. The *FAO* suggests that around 16 million people in industrialized nations are at risk of hunger.

Malnutrition and hunger are closely intertwined, with malnutrition being a direct consequence of chronic hunger. Hunger can manifest in two forms: acute and chronic. Acute hunger occurs during crises when food supplies are depleted due to factors like droughts, floods, or wars. However, these crises are usually temporary. In contrast, chronic hunger is a persistent condition where individuals consistently lack sufficient food for their daily needs, leading to malnutrition. Chronic hunger results in reduced meal frequency and inadequate calorie intake, thereby depriving individuals of essential nutrients necessary for their overall health and well-being. This form of hunger disproportionately affects children, as they have limited reserves and are more vulnerable to the long-term effects of malnutrition.

The *FAO* recommends a minimum daily calorie intake of 2,200 for adults engaged in light work to avoid hunger. However, many people globally fall below this threshold due to ongoing poverty and limited access to resources. The relationship between poverty and undernourishment is closely intertwined. Even farmers in rural areas require money for



essential items like tools, fertilizers, seeds, clothing, and healthcare. When harvests fail, families struggle to stockpile food or generate income from surplus produce.

Poverty exacerbates the problem further, as impoverished families often spend a significant portion of their income on food. In comparison, families in developed countries typically allocate a smaller percentage of their income for this purpose. In recent years, the prices of food and energy, including gasoline, have risen due to factors like the financial crisis. This has resulted in an increase in the number of malnourished people globally.

It is estimated that today over 800 million people live in extreme poverty, earning less than \$1.25 per day. The majority of these individuals reside in Asia and Africa. Additionally, the World Bank suggests that approximately 2.5 billion people have less than \$2 per day at their disposal, signifying widespread poverty across nearly half of the world's population.

Yemen and South Sudan serve as grim illustrations of the dire consequences of malnutrition during a crisis. Ongoing conflicts, economic instability, and collapsing healthcare systems have contributed to the devastating situations for children in these regions. In Yemen, nearly 2.3 million children under the age of five suffer from acute malnutrition, with 400,000 at risk of severe acute malnutrition. Similarly, in South Sudan, almost 1.4 million children under the age of five suffer from acute malnutrition. Limited access to nutritious food, clean water, and disrupted healthcare services have exacerbated the problem, leading to a startled increase in child mortality rates. Political challenges, such as conflict and displacement, disrupt agricultural activities, leading to food shortages and limited access to healthcare and humanitarian aid. In Afghanistan, nearly 40% of children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition due to ongoing conflicts and political instability.

Other root causes of malnutrition in areas of crisis can be attributed to armed conflict and political instability, economic challenges, and limited healthcare infrastructure. Armed conflict disrupts food production and distribution, exacerbating food insecurity and malnutrition. Political instability hinders long-term development strategies and prevents effective policy implementation. Economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and instability further perpetuate malnutrition rates, as families struggle to afford nutritious food and healthcare services. Limited healthcare infrastructure in crisis-affected regions hampers the prevention and treatment of malnutrition among children.

Global malnutrition affecting children, particularly in areas of crisis, is a pressing issue, that stems from various indicators occurring in such regions.



## II. Definition of Key Terms

**Areas of crisis:** Regions facing significant challenges and difficulties in society and politics, often due to armed conflicts, natural disasters, political instability, or severe socio-economic conditions. They require urgent attention and intervention to alleviate suffering and restore stability.

*FAO:* The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations addresses malnutrition by supporting countries in developing sustainable agriculture practices, improving food production and availability, and promoting dietary diversity.

**Hunger:** Hunger refers to the physiological sensation or condition of needing or desiring food. It can manifest as chronic hunger, which is long-term inadequate food intake and poor nutrition, often associated with poverty and food insecurity, or as acute hunger, which is a sudden and severe lack of food caused by emergencies or disruptions in food availability.

Both chronic and acute hunger can lead to malnutrition and other health problems, emphasizing the need for efforts to address food security and provide sustainable solutions.

**LEDCS (Less Economically Developed Countries):** Nations characterized by lower levels of economic development, infrastructure, and industrialization compared to more economically advanced countries. LEDCs often face challenges in meeting basic needs, higher poverty rates, and vulnerability to shocks.

**Malnutrition:** A condition arising from a deficiency, excess, or imbalance of essential nutrients such as proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, and minerals. It results in the improper balance of nutrients required for healthy growth, development, and maintenance of bodily functions.

**NGOs:** Non-governmental organizations independently address social issues, provide assistance to marginalized communities, conduct research, and raise awareness about various societal concerns, including malnutrition.

*Save the Children:* Save the Children is an international NGO that implements nutrition programs, supports breastfeeding and infant feeding practices, and advocates for policy changes to combat malnutrition.

*SDG:* The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of global goals established by the United Nations to achieve sustainable development, including actions to address malnutrition and related issues.



**Stunting:** Stunting is a condition, where children experience growth and development impairment, particularly in height or length, often resulting from malnutrition.

*SUN: The Scaling Up Nutrition* movement coordinates action among governments, organizations, and stakeholders to enhance nutrition outcomes, particularly addressing undernutrition.

*UNICEF: The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund* implements programs to address malnutrition, provide humanitarian assistance, advocate for children's rights, and support breastfeeding and infant feeding practices.

**Wasting:** Wasting is a condition involving rapid weight and muscle loss, often indicating acute malnutrition in children.

*WHO: The World Health Organization* works with governments and partners to address malnutrition by ensuring access to healthcare, preventing disease outbreaks, and promoting healthy living conditions.

*WFP: The World Food Programme* combats malnutrition by providing food assistance in emergencies, addressing hunger-related challenges, and promoting sustainable development.

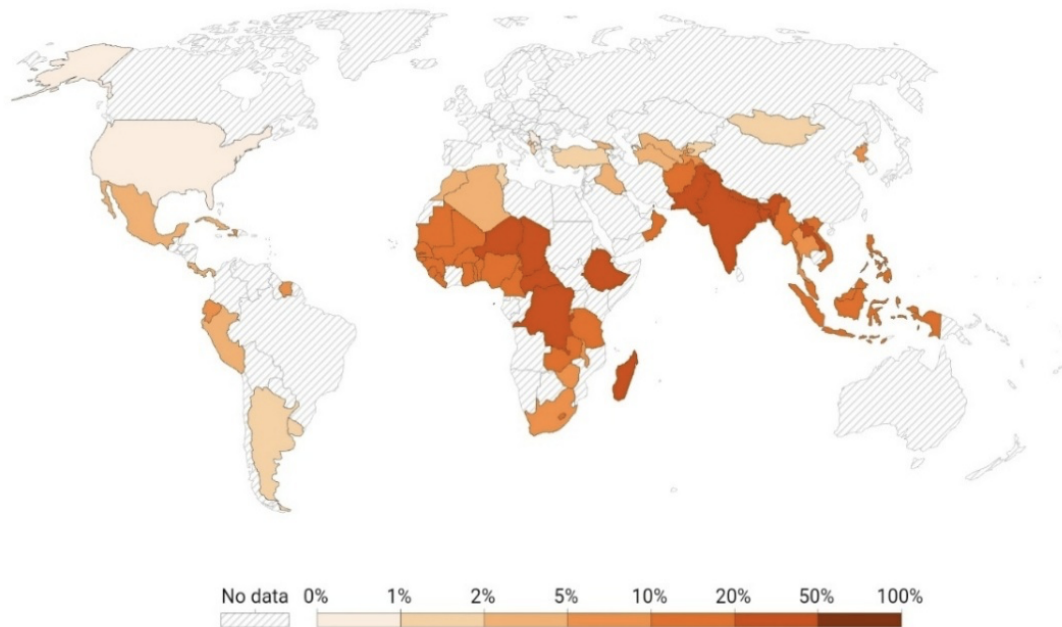
### **III. Background information**

Studies have shown that malnourished children suffer from stunting, wasting and weakened immune systems, and increased vulnerability to diseases. For example in Sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 23% of children under the age of five experience chronic malnutrition, perpetuating cycles of poverty by impairing their physical and cognitive development, increasing susceptibility to illness, contributing to intergenerational malnutrition, reducing economic productivity, and limiting access to resources and opportunities for social and economic advancement.

Similarly, in Haiti, a less economically developed country (LEDC), around 22% of children under five suffer from acute malnutrition due to poverty and limited access to clean water and sanitation.

## Malnutrition: Share of children who are underweight, 2020

The share of children younger than five years old whose weight for age is more than two standard deviations below the median for the international reference population for ages 0-59 months.



Source: UNICEF, World Health Organization and World Bank

OurWorldInData.org/hunger-and-undernourishment/ • CC BY

*Figure 2: Share of Children who are underweight by UNICEF, World Health Organization (WHO), 2020*

The figure depicting the “Share of Children who are underweight” by *UNICEF* and the *World Health Organization (WHO)* in 2020 holds significant relevance to the topic of global malnutrition of children. This provides a visual representation of the extent of underweight children worldwide, offering concrete evidence of the pervasive nature of malnutrition and its impact on the younger generation. It becomes obvious that the continent of Africa and South Asia are affected the most, with 50 and more percent of the younger population suffering from grave malnutrition.

Moreover, malnutrition disproportionately affects women and girls, perpetuating inequality and hindering social advancement. Girls require more nutrients like protein and iron to support their growth spurt and regular menstruation cycles, leading to higher malnutrition rates compared to males.

Addressing global malnutrition is essential for several reasons. Primarily, there is a moral obligation to ensure that every child has access to healthy food and the opportunity for growth. Malnutrition causes ongoing suffering and violates fundamental human rights.



Furthermore, addressing malnutrition offers significant economic advantages. Nutrition interventions and breaking the cycle of malnutrition result in increased productivity, reduced medical expenses, and improved overall health. For every dollar invested in nutrition, there is a return of \$16 in terms of increased productivity. Providing children with proper nutrition in crisis-affected areas leads to healthier and more productive societies, fostering economic growth and stability.

To combat global malnutrition effectively, comprehensive solutions are necessary. These solutions include ensuring access to healthy meals for everyone, promoting healthy eating habits, improving agricultural practices, strengthening healthcare systems, enhancing nutrition education, and addressing socioeconomic inequities. These efforts aim to tackle the root causes of malnutrition and implement targeted interventions.

In the past, the *United Nations* and its agencies have actively engaged in addressing the issue of malnutrition through various programs and initiatives.

An example is the SUN Movement, a global initiative which focuses on decreasing malnutrition, particularly in children, by uniting governments, civil society, businesses, and other stakeholders to develop and implement efficient strategies. The *UN* promotes a two-pronged approach to combat malnutrition through nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions. These interventions address immediate nutritional needs and underlying causes, respectively.

Combating global malnutrition affecting children in areas of crisis requires comprehensive efforts. Finding a solution is crucial to alleviate human suffering, promote sustainable development, and provide children in crisis areas with a brighter future.

To combat global malnutrition affecting children in areas of crisis, it is necessary to uphold a comprehensive and efficient approach with effective solutions.

Ways in which the *UN* can help solve the issue is a combination of research and innovation, monitoring and evaluation systems, collaboration and partnerships, resource allocation and investment, capacity building and education, as well as policy and advocacy. Institutions that can sponsor these actions would be *UNICEF*, *UNESCO*, *OHCHR* and many more.

By incorporating these elements into a cohesive strategy, we can work towards efficient solutions, evidence-based interventions, and sustainable progress in improving nutrition outcomes for vulnerable populations.





Another way the goals can be achieved is by strengthening the political framework and governance with the collaboration between the affected nations and institutions as well as NGOs, which would involve prioritizing nutrition objectives within a broader health and development framework and ensuring intersectional coordination. Political leadership and commitment at both local and global levels are vital for effective implementation.

Also, poverty alleviation programs and social safety nets ensure access to sufficient resources for adequate nutrition. Conflict resolution and peace building create stable environments where nutrition can thrive. Nutrition education and community engagement empower individuals to make informed choices and drive sustainable change. Addressing micronutrient deficiencies through supplementation and food fortification fills nutrient gaps and improves overall nutritional intake. Together, these actions address the underlying causes of malnutrition and contribute to better health outcomes.

By implementing these measures in a coordinated and sustained manner, we can effectively combat global malnutrition, particularly among children in areas of crisis.

Global malnutrition affecting children in areas of crisis has deep historical roots.

The impact of colonialism and exploitation disrupted traditional agricultural practices, leading to poverty and limited access to nutritious food in many less economically developed countries (LEDCs). These regions, often considered areas of crisis, face additional challenges due to political instability, conflicts, and civil unrest. These factors further disrupt food production, distribution systems, and healthcare services, exacerbating malnutrition.

Economic challenges, including high levels of debt and limited economic development, also contribute to the lack of affordable and available nutritious food for families.

Insufficient investment in healthcare systems, education, clean water, and sanitation infrastructure compounds the issue of malnutrition. Limited access to these essential resources hampers healthcare services, nutrition education, and safe food storage and preparation practices. Climate change and environmental degradation disproportionately affect these areas, resulting in droughts, floods, and extreme weather events that disrupt agricultural production, leading to food shortages and price spikes, thereby contributing to malnutrition.



Additionally, limited access to education and a lack of awareness about proper nutrition and childcare practices perpetuate malnutrition. Caregivers struggle to provide balanced diets and appropriate care for children without adequate knowledge and understanding.

International aid and interventions have been implemented to address malnutrition, but their effectiveness and sustainability vary. Therefore a deep understanding of the complex historical context and the development of effective strategies that encompass social, economic, political, and environmental factors is required.

### **IX. UN treaties and resolutions**

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 2: “Zero Hunger” (2015):

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg22>.

UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1: “Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (2015):

[https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/13](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/13)

UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/71/289: “Decade of Action on Nutrition” (2016):

<https://www.un.org/nutrition/sites/www.un.org.nutrition/files/a-res-71-289-en.pdf4>. UN

General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/231: “Global Compact on Refugees” (2018):

<https://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/5b7d8db44/global-compact-on-refugees.html5>.

UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/74/206: “Improving Global Health and Strengthening the Role of the United Nations” (2019):

[https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/74/206](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/74/206)

UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/63/245: “International Year of Quinoa” (2009):

<https://undocs.org/A/RES/63/245>

UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/64/236: “International Year of Pulses” (2010):

<https://undocs.org/A/RES/64/236>

UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/67/262: “The Right to Food” (2012):

<https://undocs.org/A/RES/67/262>

UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/69/313: “International Year of Soils” (2015):

<https://undocs.org/A/RES/69/313>

UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/73/250: “International Year of Indigenous Languages” (2018):



<https://undocs.org/A/RES/73/250>

### **LXIII. How to Prepare as a Delegate**

In order to have fruitful debates, you as a delegate should prepare yourself and gain knowledge on your topic. This research report only provides you with a brief outlook on the issue of global malnutrition affecting children in areas of crisis. Look up past treaties and resolutions and find out what has been done to improve the situation. Research the given resolutions and look for past treaties involving your country, allies, or political rivals in the committee. Take a critical look at past actions taken and on possible obstacles. Find out what your country specifically has done to improve the situation of their own country or others and what their political standpoint is. If they have done nothing, find out which reasons could have impacted this decision.

After completing your research, you should be able to answer following questions such as but not limited to;

In how far are the people of your country affected by this issue?

What are indicators of malnutrition and why are children specifically affected?

Has your country done anything to solve the issue and if so, what were the effects?

Finally, you can improve your debating skills and the quality of the debate by prewriting your opening speech and writing down key points you want to mention beforehand.

Please make sure to submit your **two Position** papers and **one Resolution** until September 8th, 2023! Please keep in mind, that any document submitted after this deadline, will not be corrected by the Student officers. The final deadline is October 10th, 2023, by then you should have submitted all of your documents. If that is not the case, delegates can be excluded from certain procedures in the debate.

Good luck and best regards, if you seem to have trouble while doing research, feel free to contact me; [larissa.akhbar@gmail.com](mailto:larissa.akhbar@gmail.com) I am more than happy to assist.

### **.Useful Links**

Action Against Hunger: <https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/>

Bread for All: A Swiss development organization focused on food security and nutrition.

Their website provides resources, case studies, and reports on various aspects of combating malnutrition and hunger: <https://www.breadforall.ch/en/>



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – Global Nutrition: Provides information, research, and guidelines on global nutrition issues, covering topics such as maternal and child nutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and interventions:

<https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/global/index.html>

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO):

<http://www.fao.org/home/en/>

Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN): <https://www.gainhealth.org/>

Global Database on Child Growth and Malnutrition: Managed by WHO, contains data on child growth, malnutrition, and related indicators from various countries:

<https://www.who.int/tools/growth-reference-data-for-5to19-years/en/>

Global Nutrition Report: An annual publication assessing the state of the world's nutrition, offering an overview of progress made in tackling malnutrition and identifying areas needing attention: <https://globalnutritionreport.org/>

Lancet: Renowned medical journal that publishes research on health issues, including malnutrition, with articles, studies, and reports related to child malnutrition:

<https://www.thelancet.com/>

ReliefWeb: Provides updates on global crises, including malnutrition and food security issues, serving as a valuable resource for humanitarian information and reports:

<https://reliefweb.int/>

Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN): <https://scalingupnutrition.org/>

State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World: Published annually by FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO, providing comprehensive data, analysis, and trends on global hunger and malnutrition. <http://www.fao.org/state-of-food-security-nutrition/en/>

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): <https://www.unicef.org/>

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Addresses global challenges, including malnutrition, with SDG 2: Zero Hunger and associated targets and indicators related to nutrition: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal2>

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH): <https://www.unicef.org/wash>

World Bank – Nutrition: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/nutrition>

World Food Programme (WFP): <https://www.wfp.org/>

World Health Organization (WHO): <https://www.who.int/>



## **LXV.Sources**

UNICEF: All Together to Prevent Child Malnutrition (South Sudan):

<https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/all-together-prevent-child-malnutrition>

UNICEF Data: Malnutrition:

<https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/malnutrition/>

United Nations: Sustainable Development Goal 2 – Zero Hunger:

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger/>

NHS: Malnutrition

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/malnutrition/>

Academic book chapter: “Nutrition in the First 1,000 Days”:

<https://academic.oup.com/book/25049/chapter/189155649>

Save the Children: Children Malnutrition Prevention:

<https://www.savethechildren.in/blog/child-protection/children-malnutrition-prevention/>

Brot für die Welt: <https://www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/>

SOS-Kinderdörfer: “Hungerkrise Ostafrika”:

<https://www.sos-kinderdoerfer.de/informieren/hilfsprojekte/hungerkrise-ostafrika?gclid=CjwKCAjwvpCkBhB4EiwAujULMhe9YUyXH0ECIXLGNzU6vsfFoTEOW0tpCy6RL20LgENWVjTYak2oOBoCJVsq>

FAO: Hunger: <https://www.fao.org/hunger/en/>

FAO: The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World:

<https://www.fao.org/publications/home/fao-flagship-publications/the-state-of-food-security-and-nutrition-in-the-world/en>



Welthungerhilfe: Welthunger-Index:

<https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/hunger/welthunger-index>

World Health Organization (WHO): Child Malnutrition:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/child-malnutrition>

Global Nutrition Report:

<https://globalnutritionreport.org/>

World Food Programme (WFP): Nutrition: <https://www.wfp.org/nutrition>

Figure 1: <https://images.app.goo.gl/nv8p5enNdg5VRTLV6>

Figure 2: <https://images.app.goo.gl/8o9yQeQzDeoGisKV6>