

2nd BILMUN
United Nations Conference
Study Guide



UNICEF

Child Obesity and Nutrition

Winter 2023
Kusadasi - Turkey





Table of Contents

1. Introduction to the Committee
2. Terminology
3. Agenda Topic: Child Obesity and Nutrition
 - 3.1. Causes of Child Obesity and Poor Nutrition
 - 3.2. Health Dangers
 - 3.3. UNICEF's International Action
 - 3.4. Prevention and Confrontation
4. Research Steps
5. Useful Links
6. References

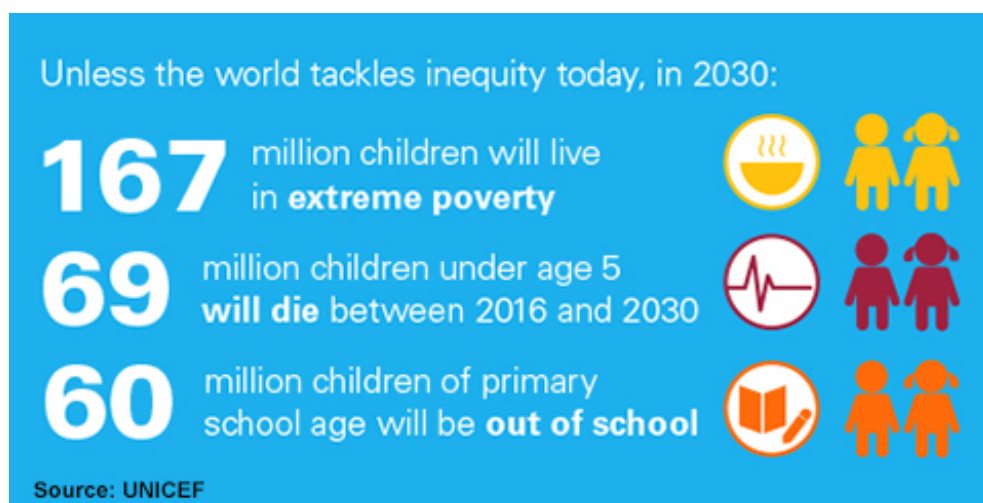


1. Introduction to the Committee

After the turmoil of the World War II (1939-1945) and following the founding of the United Nations (1945), the United Nations General Assembly voted in favor of the establishment of a new international fund named as the “United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF)” that was later on founded on the 11th of December 1946.

Initially, UNICEF was directed towards the improvement of children’s welfare in the countries shaken by the World War II, especially by providing financial aid, emergency food and healthcare to children and families in need.

From 1950, UNICEF has broaden its aims by focusing widely on the improvement in standards of living of every disadvantaged, excluded or vulnerable child across the globe. All children should share the same opportunities in life, family, education, employment and welfare. No child should be discriminated or deprived from these rights by external factors whether they are social, economic or political. UNICEF strives for the establishment of equality amongst all children of the world by simultaneously eliminating all obstacles that can stand on a child’s way to access the each opportunity offered by life itself.



To better achieve this goal, UNICEF aims not only at providing aid to children but also to their families, communities and social environment in order to create the proper framework for a child to be brought up and to live.

One of the major parts of UNICEF’s action plan are promotional campaigns as well as fundraising programs, with a view to facilitate financially its attempts regarding children’s welfare.

Nonetheless, what is more crucial to be mentioned are UNICEF’s real-time actions and operations in fields where urgent needs or every kind of emergencies occur.



2. Terminology

Following the short introduction to what UNICEF constitutes, the below section focuses on thoroughly defining some of the terms referred in the study guide so as to help you further understand both the context and content of the topic.

Obesity: Obesity is a biological disease of a person, when its weight exceeds the appropriate level in correspondence to its height. More specifically, obesity is defined as a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more. Bearing in mind that it cannot be considered as a condition but only as a disease, there are certain methods of prevention and treatments against its appearance and evolution.

Child Obesity: Child obesity is the disease appearing among children and teenagers until the age of 18.

BMI: The body mass index (BMI) is a value derived from the height and weight of an individual and it is calculated as follows: $BMI = \text{weight (kg)} \div \text{height}^2 \text{ (m}^2\text{)}$. A healthy adult's BMI is considered to be between 18.5 and 25.

Nutrition: To begin with, the term of nutrition constitutes the intake of food according to each person's dietary needs in order for its organism to gain the energy needed for its biological functions. Furthermore, nutrition also includes the dietary habits of a person that are directly linked to its level of health. A well-balanced nutrition stands as a cornerstone for good health, while poor nutrition may lead to multiple health malfunctions of the human body.

Poor Nutrition/Malnutrition: Poor nutrition or malnutrition refers to the eating habits of under or over eating, as well as to the terms of undernutrition or overnutrition.

Overnutrition: Overnutrition is the habitual or frequent overconsumption of nutrients by the excessive consumption of food. While obesity – as a stage of over eating - is a compulsion considered as a disease, overnutrition is related to the voluntary consumption of food over the appropriate level. Overnutrition may lead to dangerous health issues mainly when it comes to the intake of carbohydrates and fat.

Undernutrition: Undernutrition is a nutrient deficiency linked with the consumption of an inadequate variety of nutrients that are necessary for the functions of the human body. Undernutrition doesn't only come as a result of undereating but it also appears in many cases of over eating, when certain category of nutrients is being crossed off from a person's daily diet.



3. Agenda Topic: Child Obesity and Nutrition

3.1. Causes of Child Obesity and Poor Nutrition

It is undoubtedly accepted that no one can limit the causes of child obesity and poor nutrition only to one factor; the causes can be derived from a variety of biological, behavioral, social, psychological, technological, environmental, economic and cultural backgrounds.

Concerning child obesity, the rates of the aforementioned disease have increased in the recent years as a result of excessive food intake and lack of proper exercise in the daily lives of children.

In a modern society where everything runs fast and time is more than money, children and teenagers, even from a young age, seek for fast meals highly dense in calories and, thus, in energy. Fast dietary options primarily include high-fat food and drinks that can be rapidly consumed, providing children with an easy source of energy. Additionally, the rapid preparation of these meals makes them more economical and easily accessible to children and teenagers that prioritize the cheap option of fast food instead of a well-balanced meal.

Moreover, as more and more fast food chains are being expanded internationally, their large advertisement campaigns are moving across the globe, which results to children being lured even more by a fast food option.



Unfortunately, healthy dietary options are being by far less promoted in children's daily lives. There is much less effort by their social and cultural environment – for instance, by families, schools, communities - to provide young people with information on what a healthy diet is consisted of and how a good nutrition can have a positive impact on someone's health. Children often

ignore the benefits of a well-balanced diet, however, what's worse, they seem totally unaware of how the constant consumption of high-fat food and drinks may lead to diseases, such as obesity.

Additionally, the lifestyle of modern societies highly promotes a sedentary "screen-time" for children that results in the lack of physical exercise. Regular physical activity



boosts the function of body muscles and awakens the metabolic system of each person with positive fat-burning results. These results may prevent obesity in a high rate and ameliorate the health condition of a child, suffering by obesity.

On the other hand, the constant stupefaction in front of each type of screen can't benefit the physical functions of the body, resulting in numbness of the metabolic system.

In opposition to the narrow term of obesity, poor nutrition constitutes a much more vast term including any irregularity concerning the eating habits of children. Therefore, additional points are to be mentioned regarding the causes of a poor nutrition, and especially the case of undernutrition. When under nutrition appears as a result of under eating, the causes seem mainly socioeconomic. More concretely, in under-developed and developing countries families in small and poor community come across the major difficulty of reaching adequate food sources, due to the lack of economic resources in order to obtain access to food products. Bearing in mind this inadequacy of food sources, it becomes crystal clear that children in these families lack the appropriate portion and variety of nutrients, mainly protein, and food from their daily diet, a fact that may lead to the occurrence of multiple health issues.

3.2. Health Dangers

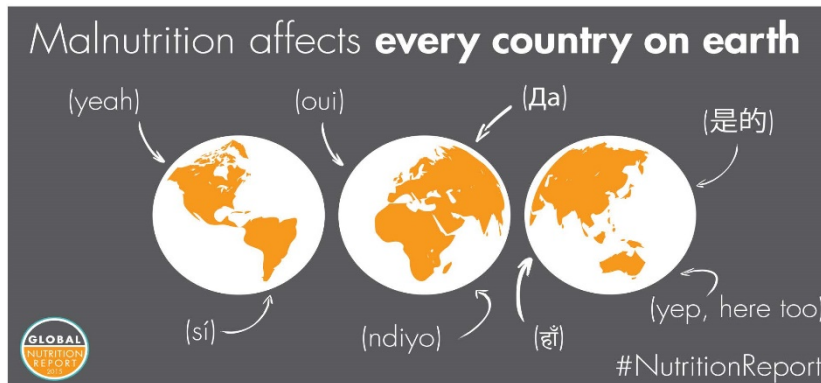
Taking into account the nature of each one of the above cases, it is prominent that all eating disorders have a large impact on people's health. Especially when it comes to children, that kind of disorders seem more difficult to be battles and the result more irreversible, when a health damage has been caused that early in a child's life.

One of the main health problems caused by children obesity is high blood pressure. Additional body fat needs oxygen and nutrients, which requires the blood vessels to circulate more blood inside the body. More circulating blood increases the workload of the heart, a fact that results in raising blood pressure, as well as the heart rate of the human body.

These exact results are further responsible for additional heart problems appearing in obese children, which are more probable to face heart arrhythmia or heart failure later in life. High blood pressure stands as an obstacle for blood to flow freely to the heart causing the probability of heart attacks and heart rhythm irregularities. At the same time, the strain of the heart caused by high blood pressure may bring about the enfeeblement and inefficiency of the heart muscle that can later on increase the risk of a heart failure incident.



Simultaneously, obesity as well as all the malnutrition cases may induce multiple breathing problem. On the one hand, excessive body fat around vital organs squeeze the lungs causing respiratory problems or even leads to short pauses of breathing during sleep. On the other hand, breathing problems are caused by the lack of nutrients, as a result of malnutrition, and especially of vitamins, minerals and other vital substances impede the proper function of human vessels, effecting the right processing of oxygen in the body.



- 800 million hungry
- 2 billion micronutrient deficient
- 1.9 billion overweight & obese
- 160 million under 5's stunted

Apart from the above, it becomes obvious that both factors – obesity and malnutrition – have impact body resistance. The excessive or inadequate provision of the body with food or nutrients fatigues all body systems, causes constant tiredness and irritation that later on leads to physical numbness and incapability in body systems, such as muscular, skeletal, metabolic and immune system.

3.3. UNICEF's International Action

UNICEF, as the leading organization in international cases regarding children issues, has recently presented a new package of initiatives in order to aid children to avoid obesity and malnutrition disorders.

In 2015, UNICEF issued the *UNICEF's Approach to Scaling up Nutrition for Mothers and Their Children*. Focusing on the battling of undernutrition and obesity, the Fund committed to “improve nutrition for all children and women by creating an enabling environment that results in evidence-based, sustainable, multisectoral nutrition actions delivered at scale”. Simultaneously, it declared the endorsement of the *World*



Health Assembly's comprehensive implementation plan to address maternal, infant, and young child nutrition.

3 years later, UNICEF, represented by UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (MENARO), organized the ***Annual Regional Meeting of the Officials of the Nutrition Programs in the Early Childhood Nutrition (ECN)***. The aim of the above multilateral meeting was to present ***UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2018-2021*** for maternal and child nutrition by improving the early child nutrition through strengthened policies and programs for early childhood nutrition.

In the same year, UNICEF, along with Beko and FC Barcelona, established one of the most active partnerships so as to raise awareness and prevent child obesity. The partnership's program will benefit at least 500,000 primary school-aged children over a one-year period from 2018 to 2019 and will create the evidence base for the adoption and replication of improved programs and policies for the prevention of obesity in school-aged boys and girls in Latin America.

3.4. Prevention and Confrontation

At this point, it is to be said that no problem can disappear without the elimination of its root-causes. If the causing factors don't get crossed off, the issue itself will keep resurfacing no matter the attempts that will be made to tackle it by its results. Thus, there are certain points that need to be taken into consideration in order to achieve a viable solution towards obesity and malnutrition:

- How can children get informed on a well-balanced diet inside their families?
What is the role of the parents?
- Should the impact of misleading fast food advertisements be limited?
- How can schools and local communities promote healthy dietary habits?
- How can children get more physically active in their daily lives?
- Can the access to food resources be promised to all children internationally?
- How should nations aid UNICEF's operations?
- How can the medical condition of people already suffering from obesity and other eating disorders be ameliorated?
- Can rehabilitation food programs be established? How?



4. Research Steps

As an international fund, UNICEF is responsible to investigate all questions in hand, following the proposals and opinions of each state in correspondence with the demands and circumstances that frame the Agenda Topic so as to reach to a resolution. However, there are certain steps in order to finally achieve the conduction of a resolution.

First a foremost, a first reading of the current study guide will aid you to understand the terms and the content of the Agenda Topic. The thorough comprehension of the Topic will stand as the cornerstone of your further preparation as a delegate.

Each one of the delegates is responsible to be aware of the topic, as well as the position of his/hers state regarding the topic. After ensuring you have understood the content of the Study Guide, it is necessary to have a clear view of your state's position towards the matter. Thus, it is needed for you to investigate how obesity and malnutrition affects your state, what your state has already done to tackle the matter and what concerns has it expressed for the future.

Following the steps above, the most important part is to form proposals. Your proposals are going to be the clauses forming the resolution and need to be concrete and effective enough to be considered as solution to the issues in hand. Your states' action plans, state and UNICEF's declarations, UNICEF and other international organizations similar initiatives may serve for you to get ideas for your proposals. In any case, your own imagination is always welcomed in this part of the simulation, as long as it is linked with the Agenda Topic and according to your state's and UNICEF's objectives.



5. Useful Links

For your facilitation, you may visit the below links in order to acquire any additional information or ideas you may need on the Agenda Topic, as mentioned above:

<https://data.unicef.org/resources/sofi-2018/> (data by topic and country on top left)

<https://scalingupnutrition.org/sun-countries/about-sun-countries/>

https://www.unicef.org/partners/Partnership_profile_2012_The_Fat_Truth_V2_approved.pdf

https://www.unicef.org/corporate_partners/index_102970.html

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wG_joNxS8-8

<https://www.unicefusa.org/mission/survival/nutrition>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_Oh5XEF2Ak

https://www.unicef.org/nutrition/files/Unicef_Nutrition_Strategy.pdf



6. References

- https://www.unicef.org/about/who/index_introduction.html
- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/UNICEF>
- <http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/children/>
- <https://www.empoweryourhealth.org/obesity-treatment>
- <https://childhoodobesityfoundation.ca/what-is-childhood-obesity/>
- <https://www.thecalculatorsite.com/articles/health/bmi-formula-for-bmi-calculations.php>
- <http://www.who.int/topics/nutrition/en/>
- <https://www.livestrong.com/article/518819-what-is-overnutrition-and-undernutrition/>
- <https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/healthy+living/is+your+health+at+risk/the+risks+of+poor+nutrition>
- <https://www.worldhunger.org/world-child-hunger-facts/>
- <https://stanfordhealthcare.org/medical-conditions/healthy-living/obesity.html>
- <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/179316.php>
- https://www.unicef.org/corporate_partners/index_102970.html
- <https://www.moh.gov.om/en/-/---710>
- https://www.unicef.org/nutrition/files/Unicef_Nutrition_Strategy.pdf