



LMUN 2026

A Background Guide for:

**Food and Agriculture Organization of
the United Nations**



LMUN 2026

**FAO | Food Security: Establishing Consumer Rights in
the 21st Century**

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Letter From Chairs:

Hello Delegates! My name is Valentina Cañas, I am currently a sophomore at Lincoln School, and have been participating as a delegate in MUN for over a year. It is an honor to be your chair for this LMUN committee, and I eagerly await hearing you share your ideas through diplomacy. I fondly admire the Food and Agriculture Organization's leading efforts to address global dilemmas that impact over half a billion people around the world. I would like to emphasize the importance of respectful conversation and collaborative idea exchange, yet I must not omit the importance of enjoying this experience to its maximum extent. I encourage you all to prepare, participate, and defend your position. Please feel free to reach out to my exceptional co-chair or me if you have any doubts. I'm looking forward to meeting you all and sharing a truly unforgettable MUN experience!

My name is Galia, I'm currently a senior, and I couldn't be more excited to be your Co-Chair for my last conference here at school. As the weekend progresses, I encourage you to express your ideas freely, collaborate with one another, listen, and make the most of every opportunity this conference has to offer. Remember, MUN is not only about debate and resolution writing, but also about learning from different perspectives, building connections, and challenging yourself to grow. I really look forward to working with all of you. If you have any questions before or during the conference, don't hesitate to reach out to me; I'm at your disposal.

Warm regards,

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Your Food and Agriculture Organization Committee Chairs



Topic Introduction

In the contemporary global system, food security has also come to refer to safety, transparency, and consumer confidence in food, apart from the commonly recognized issue of food availability. With the extension of the global food system, the growing disparity in the food handling standards of different nations regarding food labeling, certification, limits of pesticide residues on food, etc., has now emerged as an issue related to food safety, creating public health hazards as well as hindering international food trade. Another factor related to food security is the practice of the use of vague and misleading descriptions of food, which has now come to compromise the public's food selection capabilities as well. Some have argued for stricter measures in food security through the implementation of the harmonized food security standards of various countries, while others have argued to implement these measures gradually to ensure food security of the food vendors as well (FAO et al., 2023; Codex Alimentarius Commission, 2022; PAHO, 2020).

Committee Background

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialized agency responsible for fighting hunger in the world and ensuring that people have quality and sufficient food for a healthy lifestyle. It was established on the 1st of February 1945, at the first session of the UN in Quebec, Canada. Therefore, FAO initially had a (temporary) base in the USA in the city of Washington DC before moving to Rome, Italy, in 1951 to set up the permanent base. Today, the FAO has 195 member states (countries and the EU). It's overseen by a Director General and comprises different bodies such as the FAO conference, council, and committee on world food security (CFS). The FAO has regional offices in different parts of the world, such as in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and in the Near East and North Africa. The mission and objectives of FAO are to ensure that people all over the globe can have food at all times to help them live a healthy lifestyle, as seen in "the alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal #2 Zero Hunger." However, the mission statement goes further than the mere provision of improved food by focusing on the sustainable use of resources, rural development, and the protection of consumer rights with fair and transparent systems, including the establishment of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in 1963 with the WHO to establish standards in the production and distribution of food to ensure the health and well-being of the consumer as well as fair and healthy distribution of resources. FAO also aims at ensuring the consumer's



right to adequate food as a measure of a human rights-based approach by enhancing the policy and institutional foundations to effectively respond to the causes of hunger and malnutrition, with the statistics attained from the results obtained by the State of Food Security and Nutrition report in 2025 stating that as high as 720 million people suffer from hunger and 2.6 billion cannot afford healthy food. The committee has the responsibility of addressing the nexus and interaction that exists between the two concepts of food security and consumerism, and ensuring that the rights of the consumer are respected within the context of the globalized market. The “FAO Platform” enables countries to work together in establishing standards, sharing knowledge, and working towards “equitable, safe, accessible, and sustainable food systems,” as evidenced by existing efforts like the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, operational since 2019, dedicated to its vision of “public private partnerships to end poverty & hunger,” along with “the 2026 Global Emergency & Resilience Appeal that builds on agricultural solution-scaling to address acute food insecurity affecting 300 million people as deteriorating crises in countries like Sudan, Palestine, & South Sudan, etc.”

Historical Context

“Food security issues in the past three or so decades after World War II were focused mainly on raising the amount of food to end famine and hunger.” There was widespread damage to crops in the post-war years in Europe and Asia. This prompted the FAO to launch initiatives to develop the agriculture sector and raise the output. This culminated in the so-called ‘Green Revolution’ of the sixties and seventies, when high-yielding variety crops such as semi-dwarf wheat and rice, introduced by Borlaug, were used to raise the output of crops in countries in the developing world such as India, Mexico, and the Philippines. While famine was checked, there were also worries over the dangers that the Green Revolution posed to the global environment, such as the destruction of the topsoil and the loss of biodiversity. (FAO.; Borlag Legacy References) However, as the technology used in agriculture evolved and as the global community got increasingly interlinked, there were emerging questions over the quality and integrity of the food that was actually reaching the consumer, as manifested in the advent of such chemicals as pesticides and GMOs, as well as synthetic additives and their potential long-term health impact on the consumer. By the 1990s, discussions within the FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO) emphasized the need for internationally recognized food safety standards, leading to the creation of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in 1963 (jointly by FAO and WHO), which set guidelines



for labeling, additives, and contaminants to harmonize trade and protect consumers. (FAO- WHO Codex, n.d.) In the 21st century, the conversation has expanded to include consumer rights, environmental sustainability, and corporate accountability. Today, food security is not only a matter of ensuring that food is available, but also that it is safe, fairly represented, and produced under ethical conditions. With ongoing debates addressing climate resilience, equitable access amid globalization, and the integration of human rights-based approaches to food.

Topic Summary

Currently, food security in the world is not just about the quantity of food in the world but also its security in the sense of its integrity and the level of its transparent sourcing. This was noted in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in its chapter on "Food security and Consumer Rights." This was informed due to the industrialization of food production and the addition of additives, as well as the marketing of food items in the modern world. This situation has made consumers like us vulnerable. "Today in many parts of the world, the term 'organic' or 'natural' labeling of food still lacks a clear definition and the tolerance". An estimated 673 million people worldwide, or 8.2/8.3 percent of the global population, were undernourished in 2024. This number includes 2.3 billion people worldwide living with moderate to severe food insecurity, 336 million people more than in 2019. Hunger is increasing in Africa and Western Asia due to ongoing high food price inflation." (FAO et al., 2025)

Historically, international work on food safety has focused on the reduction of hunger and malnutrition, but the increasingly complex supply chains of today's world require a new emphasis on standards, labeling, and ethics of production. FAO and WHO jointly manage the Codex Alimentarius Commission, which has continued to update guidelines on food additives, contaminants, recent 2025 adoptions of maximum levels for lead in spices, and revisions to aflatoxin prevention in peanuts, and labeling to reduce misleading chains and harmonize the safety standards of products globally. FAO-WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission, 2025.

The issue assumes outstanding importance at a time when increasingly there is a demand for increased transparency among food products with surveys revealing that 82% of global consumers desire greater clarity and ease in understanding health and wellness products, with over 60% noting the ingredient list with GMOs and pesticides, and yet a



majority are willing to pay more for products that are certified, transparent, or sustainability-sourced to rectify the growing lack of trust in the food system and food producers. (Nielsen IQ, 2205, DNV, 2020-2025 Trends). The committee delegates are charged with the responsibility to respond to critical questions such as: "What level of international law will set standards for the amounts of preservatives and toxins allowable in food products? What systems will guarantee veracity and truth to products labeled 'organic' or 'non-toxic'? What level of separation exists between fair advertising and deception? In responding to these and similar critical questions, the delegation will aim at cementing the relationship between food security and rights to ensure a safer and trusted world food system that will increasingly face challenges confronting existing systems with food inflation, regional inequality, and ensuring conditions for achieving targets set for SDG #2

Key Terms

- **Codex Alimentarius:** An international food standards body established by FAO and WHO to set guidelines on labeling, additives, contaminants, and safety, promoting fair trade and consumer protection
- **Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs):** regulatory thresholds for pesticide residues in food, varying by country but aimed at minimizing health risks.
- **Organic Certification:** Rigorous processes verifying compliance with standards on pesticide use, animal welfare, and environmental protection, as seen in EU Regulation 2018/848
- **Greenwashing:** misleading marketing claims about environmental or health benefits (e.g., "natural" labels on processed foods with additives)
- **Front-of-package labeling:** a warning system for high sugar, sodium, or fat content, pioneered in Latin America to enhance nutritional transparency.
- **Traceability:** the ability to track food from production to consumption, ensuring accountability for supply chains.
- **Food Security:** Access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food for a healthy life, extending to sustainability and consumer rights.
- **Consumer Rights:** Protection against misleading information, unsafe products, and unethical practices, including education and redress mechanisms.



Topics to Discuss

1. Standardization of Food Labeling and Claims

- a. Establishment of international definitions for terms like “organic”, “non-GMO”, and “natural” to avoid misinformation and the “tergiversation” of these terms

2. Regulation of Additives and Contaminants

- a. Establishing worldwide standards on pesticide residues, preservatives, and artificial substances to ensure public health.

3. Ethical and Transparent Marketing

- a. To ensure that advertisement practices are an accurate reflection of nutrients and production practices.

4. Consumer Education and Rights

- a. Campaigns for creating awareness among consumers and mechanisms through which they can make the best decisions

5. Global Cooperation for Safe Food Systems

- a. Building on stronger cooperation among all FAO member states in aligning their approaches to food safety standards, their research, and trade practices.

Current Situation

However, as far as the global scenario is concerned, as of January 2026, global food security and consumer rights are pressing issues that continue to plague the globe due to several factors, such as climate change, supply chain challenges, and economic inequality. According to the FAO’s latest available report, over a staggering figure of 800 million people continue to face the growing issue of hunger due to conflicts that are spreading across countries such as Ukraine and the Middle East, forcing the prices of foodstuffs to rise. The growing issue of consumer rights is also becoming increasingly concerning due to misleading labeling practices that are affecting the global food chain as a whole. For instance, the rise of ‘greenwashing’ concerning foodstuffs in the global marketplace is a significant issue that is affecting countries due to the presence of unsustainable claims, such as the use of the terms "sustainable" or "natural." Pesticide additives are also a growing health risk that is affecting the global population, especially in developing countries. Recent Developments Weather



countries such as those in the European Union are implementing strict regulations regarding the use of such additives or the presence of traces of such compounds in various products.

Case Studies

European Union

The EU has put in place one of the most restrictive consumer protection regulations with regard to the labeling of products. The European Union's Organic Regulation 2018/848, which has been effective from 2022, has advocated rigorous processes and certification of producers intending to use the label 'organic.' These processes entail compliance with the regulations and standards of the use of pesticides, the welfare of animals, and the protection of the environment. Every phase of the supply chain is traceable, which translates to transparency and accountability. Overall, the approach has been commendable in ensuring consumer trust and environmentally conscious farming. However, as has been realized in other instances, smaller entities are often at a disadvantage in terms of financial challenges and lack the capacity to compete with other larger farm businesses.

Key terms:

1. Organic Regulation 2018/848: EU regulation governing the use of the "organic" label, certification steps, and traceability.
2. Traceability: the ability to follow a product through production, processing, and distribution.
3. Certification barrier: the financial and administrative hurdles small producers face when obtaining certification.
4. Third-party audit: independent verification used to support label credibility.

India

While the country's booming agriculture seems to have thrived on its crop diversity and production levels, it also incurred major criticisms pertaining to its pesticides and residues. In an attempt to tackle these growing issues, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, also abbreviated as FSSAI, framed a regulation called the Food Safety Standards and Contaminants, Toxins, and Residue Laws for defining maximum residue limits for pesticides and their spraying. Still, a large percentage was seen to have pesticides beyond permissible limits during a 2020 research conducted in 30% of the various produce from



several states across India, leading to a nationwide vigil and subsequent efforts to reform, such as the Jaivik Bharat movement for organic certification labels.

Key Terms:

1. FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India): national body setting MRLs and food safety standards.
2. Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs): allowable pesticide residue levels in food.
3. Jaivik Bharat: India's organic certification/labeling campaign.
4. Enforcement gap: uneven testing and inspection capacity across regions.

United States

The U.S. has seen many cases filed against companies for their misleading health claims, labeling processed foods as "natural," "wholesome," or "light" that contain additives or a high sugar content. High-profile lawsuits against Kellogg's and General Mills have unraveled the tension between corporate marketing strategies and genuine consumer protection. Public pressure led to a reform of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and has shown that consumer activity and legal action can change food policy on items like the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) and new requirements to show genetically modified ingredients.

Key Terms:

1. Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA): U.S. law that shaped nutrition labeling standards.
2. FTC / FDA oversight agencies are involved in regulating advertising claims and food safety.
3. Misleading claims / "natural" claims: ambiguous marketing terms commonly challenged in litigation.
4. Class-action litigation: a legal mechanism that has driven corporate transparency and label changes.

Latin America

Latin America is recognizable as a special case in terms of the interrelation of the food markets, the economy, and a lack of regulations facing the people residing there. Much progress was achieved by countries such as Mexico, Brazil, and Chile in the last few years, yet the gap is there as well. A groundbreaking piece of legislation was passed in Chile in 2016 that introduced warning labels for foods that are high in sugar, salt, or fat. This



effectively eliminated the advertising to children of foods that are bad for their health and raised much awareness in the country. A way of life that has encouraged the incorporation of the aforementioned regulations into Mexico, Peru, Argentina, and Colombia, recognizing Latin America as a global leader in transparent food. Nevertheless, due to extensive informal economic activity, traceability issues, and non-uniform safety standard enforcement, consumers face numerous health hazards. In fact, the FAO and Pan American Health Organization have supported numerous regional efforts to enhance modernized systems for ensuring enhanced safety levels and better labeling; however, farmers face obstacles in seeking certification and adequate training.

Key terms:

1. Front-of-Package (FOP) warning labels: simple warning icons for high sugar/salt/fat products (e.g., Chile model).
2. Informal markets: food sales outside formal regulation that reduce traceability and enforcement.
3. Regional cooperation (PAHO / FAO projects): joint technical/support efforts to modernize safety systems.
4. Certification access: programs or subsidies to help small farmers obtain recognized labels.

Bloc Positions

Within the FAO committee, most often the nations band together based on their level of development, economic predominance, and their view on legislation. This can be determined solely based on case studies carried out on previous nations on food security and consumer safety measures.

- Developed Western Bloc (EU countries, USA, Canada, Australia, etc.): They would advocate for strict and universal rules to be implemented globally in terms of labeling, additives, and advertising in order to support and guard consumer interests as well as promote fair business practices globally. They promote fair and green business practices and encourage other countries to adopt a model such as the European Union's regulation on organic production or to amend their existing rules under the Food and Drug Administration in America, etc. But they also tend to discourage high subsidies to small businesses or support large corporations.



- The Developing Asian Bloc includes India, China, and Indonesia. It would balance food production growth against consumer safety, citing issues such as overuse of pesticides and lack of enforcement. They generally favor international assistance to build infrastructure and educate farmers, but also remain opposed to excessively restrictive standards due to their possible impacts on agricultural exports or the additional cost to small farmers. For example, India advances flexible MRLs and, at the same time, promotes organic alternatives with campaigns like Jaivik Bharat without causing rural economies to lose accepting status.
- Latin American Bloc: for example, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina would focus on the issues of inequality and informal markets through the use of innovative policies such as front-of-packaging warning labels. They call for regional cooperation with organizations such as PAHO so as to try to update the safety systems, emphasizing consumer education and traceability. They often stress that equitable trade practices are required in order to protect vulnerable populations while calling for support in certification for small-scale farmers so as to be able to compete on the global level.
- African and Middle Eastern Bloc (e.g., Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt, Saudi Arabia) Emphasis: The African and Middle Eastern food systems place more importance on food accessibility than consumer rights, mainly because most people are hungry and are exposed to different climatic changes. They focus on international agreements for the transfer and funding of agricultural technologies and readily accept international imports to circumvent barriers in international trade. However, it could support the position of developing blocs in objection to Western-dominated regulations that have the potential to aggravate poverty in these countries.
- Other Alignments: Neutral or Bridging countries like Japan or South Korea may support tech-based solutions (e.g., blockchain for traceability). While OPEC nations focus on integrating food security with energy policies.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer:

Possible Solutions

Solutions should be practical, collaborative, and aligned with FAO's mandate.

1. **Standardization of FOOD LABELLING and claims:** developing a global database under FAO that confirms such labelling and claims with blockchain-based



technologies; mandatory third-party auditing for “organic” or “non-GMO” products, and offering subsidies to small holder developing countries to adopt such practices.

2. **Regulation of Additives & Contaminants:** Update the Codex Alimentarius Commission, giving binding Maximum Residue Levels, offering regional flexibility for the phasing in of measures in the third world. Collaborate globally in shared testing labs, fund Canadian educators, and provide the necessary funds.
3. **Ethical and Transparent Marketing:** Developing guidelines by FAO that forbid vague claims without evidence, with consequences for violators such as fines and publication of such violations by FAO. Promoting “real-time” electronic scanning tools for consumers to validate such claims by scanning the product.
4. **Consumer Education and Rights:** Launch global awareness campaigns in association with the WHO and NGO’s. Form an international platform of consumer complaints with the option to lodge complaints with various government agencies for investigations.
5. **Global Cooperation for Safe Food Systems:** Establish regional FAO hubs for knowledge-sharing and researching alternatives to pesticides in a more sustainable way. Promote international trade agreements based on ethical standards with rewards such as a reduction in tariffs for compliant countries.

Possible Operative Clauses

1. Digital & online Consumer Protection

- a. How can governments ensure transparency and fairness in online contacts, subscriptions and “terms and conditions”?
- b. What measures should be taken to protect consumers from misleading digital information, advertising, and hidden fees?
- c. How can consumer rights be implemented effectively across digital platforms

2. Data privacy

- a. What safeguards are needed to protect consumer and personal data in digital services. Consent mechanisms, rights to access, rectification, and erasure?



- b. How should governments address data collection, profiling, and decision making that might harm the consumers? (e.g., like unfair targeting and discrimination)
- c. What cross-boarders mechanisms can ensure consistent data privacy protection in global digital markets?

3. Product Safety & Sustainability

- a. What standards should be applied to ensure the physical and digital safety of consumer products?
- b. How can governments promote sustainable consumption through requirements for product durability, repairability, recyclability, accurate environmental claims (e.g., green washing) and reduction of planned obsolescence?
- c. What mechanisms can enforce accountability for supply-chain impacts and encourage circular economy practices in consumer goods?

4. Accessibility & Inclusivity

- a. How can products, platforms, and services be designed to ensure equal access?
- b. What protections are needed for vulnerable or disadvantaged consumers ?
- c. How should policies address digital divides and promote inclusive access to essential services (either in-person, or online)

5. Transparency & Corporate Accountability

- a. What obligations should apply to companies regarding algorithms, supply chains, sustainability metrics, and ethical complaints?
- b. How can effective mechanisms be strengthened for digital era consumer disputes?
- c. What role should independent audits, certifications, or mandatory reporting play in holding companies accountable?

6. Education & Consumer Awareness

- a. How can FAO- supported initiatives and national programs build consumer awareness on safety risks, handling practices and the role of the Codex Alimentarius standards in protecting health and ensuring fair trade?
- b. What collaborative efforts between FAO, governments, NGOs and consumer organizations are needed to promote nutrition education?



- c. How can FAOs tools and guidelines empower consumers in agrifood systems to make informed decisions that support food security, healthy diets, and sustainable consumption patterns?

7. International Cooperation

- a. How can countries, through FAO and the Codex Alimentarius frameworks, harmonize food safety and quality standards to protect consumers?
- b. What mechanisms should strengthen FAO-led international cooperation on the progressive right to adequate food, capacity building for national food control systems, and joint actions against emerging risks
- c. How can FAO partnerships support global information sharing, technical assistance, and inclusive policies to ensure consumer rights in food security?



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