Food Crisis In Africa

In Eastern and Middle Africa, there are multiple countries whose citizens suffer from severe food insecurity. Food insecurity is defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as, “a situation that exists when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life”.¹ In 2017, an estimated one out of five people in those regions suffered chronic food deprivation (a long-term form of food insecurity).² This food shortage is affecting people in South Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Burundi, and the Central African Republic.

There are multiple factors that are contributing to this food crisis. The primary issue is erratic weather patterns, possibly due to climate change. The areas have been hit by droughts and flash floods that alternate between parching the ground and washing it away in mudslides. These prevent normal harvests. Additionally, violence in Somalia, South Sudan, and Ethiopia has led to refugees fleeing to areas that do not have sufficient food. Terrorism or ethnic violence have resulted in many refugees crowding in areas that already lacked food. Refugees have also had to flee regions because of the flash floods. An added consequence of these refugees fleeing is that many are farmers who would ordinarily be harvesting crops that they would bring to market each season. Instead, their land goes unfarmed, only furthering the dire situation. In these ways, terrorism, ethnic violence, and climate change have all played a part in worsening the food crisis.³

Steps have been taken by the United Nations to prevent this issue from devolving into a disastrous famine. In March of 2017, UN migration agency, the International Organization for Migration, called for a $24.6 million appeal specifically to help Somalia. In June of that year,

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dthis was expanded to $60 million to aid Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya in addition to Somalia.\(^4\) However, millions of people are still at risk.

If more concrete steps are not taken, the food crisis will surely worsen. Climate change is poised to further change weather patterns and as of yet, the conflicts in Somalia and South Sudan have not been resolved. Additionally, the food crisis sets the stage for further disasters. Starvation leads to weakened immune systems, especially in children, making epidemics more likely and more dangerous. Already, cases of measles in Ethiopia and Somalia affected over 24,000 children.\(^5\)

Unfortunately, simply donating money to aid agencies is not always an effective solution. There is often corruption within distribution agencies. In addition, armed fighters will often target areas they know have recently received food, stealing the food and hurting the residents.\(^6\)

For more clarity on the areas we will be discussing, please consult the map on the next page. We will be discussing all the countries that are listed, with the exception of Yemen.

Here are some specific questions you should address:

1. In the short term, what plans can be put in place to address the current food crisis? How will those plans address the related issues, such as difficulties in food distribution or disease prevention?
2. In the long term:
   a. What infrastructures can be put in place to prevent possible future food crises due to influxes of refugees?
   b. What can be done to address the growing concern of climate change’s effect on agriculture in the region?


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Because the causes of the food crisis are multifaceted, any solutions must be as well. These topics are to be used as a starting point for our upcoming discussion and are by no means a comprehensive list of what can be covered in the committee. I urge you to research this topic and your countries in depth so you can be prepared for the complex discussions we will be having. Please be sure to present your country’s position and be familiar with the guidelines listed in the YUNMUN Student Handbook, especially those regarding plagiarism.