

## **Food & Sustainable Agriculture**

It is time to rethink how we grow, share and consume our food.

If done right, agriculture, forestry and fisheries can provide nutritious food for all and generate decent incomes, while supporting people-centered rural development and protecting the environment.

But right now, our soils, [freshwater](#), [oceans](#), forests and biodiversity are being rapidly degraded. Climate change is putting even more pressure on the resources we depend on, increasing risks associated with [disasters](#) such as droughts and floods. Many rural women and men can no longer make ends meet on their land, forcing them to migrate to [cities](#) in search of opportunities.

A profound change of the global food and agriculture system is needed if we are to nourish today's 925 million hungry and the additional 2 billion people expected by 2050.

The food and agriculture sector offers key solutions for development, and is central for hunger and poverty eradication.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has launched a [Zero Hunger Challenge](#), inviting all nations to be boldly ambitious as they work for a future where no one goes hungry. The Zero Hunger Challenge has five objectives:

- ¥ 100% access to adequate food all year round.
- ¥ Zero stunted children under 2 years, no more malnutrition in pregnancy and early childhood.
- ¥ All food systems are sustainable.
- ¥ 100% growth in smallholder productivity and income, particularly for women.
- ¥ Zero loss or waste of food, including responsible consumption.

### **Background**

Sustainable agriculture is gaining support as it integrates three different aspects of society: environmental health, economic profitability, and social and economic equity. Agricultural sustainability "rests on the principle that we must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program 2006)

Think of sustainable agriculture as a "system" that depends on the interconnectedness of its different parts. When agriculture is viewed as a system, consequences and accountability become important to the success of the farm. Crops are chosen for the agrarian site by soil characteristics and water availability. (Water can ensure the success or failure of the system.) Diversification of crops ensures that if one crop fails, the others guarantee the farm is still productive. While crops are planted in rows on level surfaces, animals graze on sloped areas. Sustainability also involves creative ways of reducing water waste, runoff, and contamination. Laborers, their working and living conditions, and the health of the rural community become a valued and vital part to the success of the agrarian system.

## **Results:**

As a result of farmers using sustainable agriculture, soils are being replenished, water is being conserved, plants and animals support each other, natural and human resources are nurtured, and less chemicals are being used for pest management. Profits and farms grow, and the rural community develops into a healthy and vital part of the country or region.

## **Questions:**

1. What strategies or solutions toward sustainable agriculture have been attempted or implemented in your MUN country? What worked and why? What did not work and why?
2. What has your MUN country done to promote sustainable agriculture in developing countries? Was your MUN country successful? Be specific.
3. Change is very hard for some people, especially those who have farmed the same way for generations. What can be done to encourage farmers to consider and implement sustainable farming practices?
4. Use facts, figures, statistics, and compelling stories to support your country's position as you propose sustainable solutions and programs for producing food. Are your solutions inclusive (for everyone) or exclusive (for a select few)? Are they short term, long term, or sustainable?
5. Is your country a member of the FAO? What positions has your country advocated within this organization? *Food and Agriculture Organization*
6. How will the world meet the **Zero Hunger Challenge**? What must happen? How will your MUN country help?

## **Task**

Your task is to research and gather information on this topic and your country's relationship to this topic so you can help resolve the issues related to this topic from your country's perspective. You will be a diplomat representing your country and negotiating solutions that your country can support.

Go to the following link to begin your research:

<http://www.un.org/en/sustainablefuture/food.shtml> You should consider online searches where you use your **MUN country's name** and **sustainability** and **agriculture** as key words.

### **Other References:**

<http://www.fao.org>  
<http://un.org>  
<http://www.state.gov/s/globalfoodsecurity/129952.htm>  
<http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/index.html>  
<http://sustainableagriculture.net/our-work/>  
<http://afsic.nal.usda.gov/>  
<http://www.sare.org/publications/pollinators.htm>  
<http://www.attra.org/>  
<http://www.saipratform.org/>