



POL II

Overpopulation and Key Resources: Global Food Shortages

Introduction:

The increase amount in the world's population places a stress on some of the key resources such as food and water. As a result, some areas of the world start experiencing shortages in food supplies. Some areas in the world are experiencing large amounts of population increase, yet the resources needed for the larger population developing countries are not increasing as well. This may be as a result of many various factors, such as the climate, making it difficult for crop growth, or lack of funds. The UN states that the world population is currently at 6.5 billion, with another 76 million people increasing per year. By the year 2050, the UN estimates that there will be another 2.6 billion people. So as the population drastically increases, the food supply needed to feed all these people must increase. However, estimates illustrate that many areas are experiencing a decrease in the availability of earth's resources. The cropland within the last 50 years has been reduced by 13% and the pasture as well as been reduced by 4% (UN June 2005). The increase in the population is simply one of many different factors that contribute to the global food shortages. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations or FAO, "some 20 to 40 percent of the world's potential crop production is already lost because of the effects of weeds, pests and diseases".

The demand for food is greater than the supply in some areas, and as a result, some areas face severe malnutrition and a higher mortality rate. To increase the food supply, some countries have high hopes in using technology to increase the food supply. However, the availability of resources varies from area to area, making it difficult to come up with a universal solution to the food shortages. Global food shortages are becoming an increasing problem, especially in developing or third-world countries, which lack the technology that other developed countries have. As a result, the issue of global food shortages is yet to be resolved.

History/Background:

The issue of food shortages has been brought to attention, but recently has been alarming in the last couple of decades. Areas such as Asia and Africa have had a drastic increase in population. According to a report released by CNN, "the world's population is forecast to hit 7 billion in 2011, the vast majority of its growth coming in developing and, in my cases, the poorest nations". As a



result, many of the poorer nations are not able to increase their food supply due to their inability to access to some resources available in other developed countries. Estimates illustrate that by 2050, about 57.3% of the world's population will be from Asia and 21.7% of the world's population will be from Africa (Population Reference Bureau). As the population drastically increases in less developed regions, many developed areas will not experience a large growth. According to the Population Reference Bureau, "developed countries in Europe and North America, as well as Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, are growing less than 1 percent annually". Furthermore, some European countries are experiencing negative population growth rates such as Russia (-0.5%), Ukraine (-0.8%) and Estonia (-0.4%). If the population growth continues to fall below zero, the population size will slowly decline. However, in countries with the increase in population, such as those in Africa and Asia, now have to come up with a solution to increase the food supply in order to avoid food shortage.

Food shortages are caused by various reasons such as difficulties in food distribution and the lack of production of food. As a result of severe food shortages, famines have occurred. In the late 1970's and early 1980's, citizens of Sudan and Ethiopia suffered large famines. Famines are caused primarily by imbalance of food production compared to the overpopulation and agricultural issues such as crop failure and drought. Furthermore, famines have been caused by epidemic diseases and have a lasting impact on an area, by directly impacting the population present within that area.

Areas, which face food shortages, are primarily located in developing countries. Countries within Asia, such as India and China, experience a large increase in population. The increase in population adds to the need of more key resources to match the population needs. The key impact on the global food shortages is a result of the population increase and a country's ability to provide enough resources for its citizens.

Current Situation :

Several areas of the world are currently facing shortages in food supply. Across the Horn of Africa, drought is worsening, after "successive failed rains" (Oxfam International). In East Africa, several countries such as Kenya, Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia are facing food shortages, which are affecting nearly 12 million people (Guilfordian). The prices of foods has drastically increased, making it unaffordable for many, and hundreds of animals- used for livestock have died making it nearly impossible to support nations. According to the Guilfordian, as of June 2011, the UN has declared officially parts of southern Somalia to be in a famine. United States estimates that as a result of the famine, nearly 29,000 children have died. UN estimates that with about 640,000 children malnourished, many more deaths are expected. The Huffington Post states that there are about "seven deaths per 10,000 refugees daily in Ethiopia's Dolo Ado area". Furthermore, the UN News Centre reports that especially women and young children are at risk due to the famine. The food shortages in East Africa are most often attributed to drought. Dana Professor of Biology Lynn Moseley says "if



there is no rain, grasses won't grow-the basis for the vertebrate food chain". Drought is only one of many factors that contribute to the food shortages. The International Famine Centre states that "other factors that both contribute to and worsen famine conditions are violence, warfare, and disease".

Countries in Africa are not the only ones being affected by a famine. Remote areas in Canada are facing food shortages as a result of poor Inuit villagers who are not able to buy nutritional items such as vegetables, fruit ect (French Tribute).

As a result of violent conditions in some areas of Africa, relief resources cannot be distributed to certain areas as the violent conditions are unsafe for the relief workers. Due to this, some violent areas do not receive necessarily all the aid they need because it is dangerous for relief workers to provide aid. Violence is not the only factor that affects the availability of resources; poor infrastructure and the extortion of money by militia add to the difficulty of food distribution and food production (Guilfordian).

According to China Daily, the country hit worst by the famine is Somalia, and is 'suffering from the worst food shortage in African history". Nearly half of the country's population or about 3.6 million people risk-facing starvation. Furthermore, about half of all the children in Somalia are malnourished and about "six infants die from malnutrition every day" (China Daily). Somalia is just one of many countries which has been drastically affected by the results of the famine.

To cope with the East African famine, several humanitarian efforts are taking place. The governments of other nations and several NGO's are working to provide the best relief. Countries such as China have sent resources such as rice and wheat in relief for the famine. Other organizations such as UNICEF working with the National Transitional Council (functioning as an interim government in Libya) hopes in distributing water to 500,000 people (CNN). A statement released by the UN states that "The World Food Programme has sent about 600 metric tons of food to help 35,500 people for one month". Even through all these efforts are taking place, according to Oxfam International, an organization working to improve poverty and injustice, budgeted amounts to provide the support have not been met yet, resulting in only small amounts of aid being provided.

Bloc Positions:

It is clear that one of the world's most prominent issues is overpopulation. Many countries are becoming increasingly overpopulated creating food shortages. Some countries have a clear stand point while others are still indifferent about their positions in overpopulation. As a delegate, it is your job to help determine your country's position and form alliances with other nations who share a similar perspective in order to come up with ways to resolve this issue.

Overpopulation is common in countries such as China and India. The 1.5 billion population of China has had tremendous effects on both the economy and environment. Because of the overwhelming amount of people, shortages are common in areas such as food. It is in all interest of the world to stop this



problem. Places like the U.S., Italy, and Japan are currently doing their best in efforts to aid the needy. Organizations such as the U.N. have been the base in reducing global food shortages.

Global food shortages will be detrimental if overpopulation does not stop. Because of falling water levels and glacier levels, crops are not able to grow properly leading to food shortages. Places such as Africa have an innumerable count of children who are starving from food. Many are either malnourished or dehydrated. A constant battle of obtaining foods still exists in places such as Asia and Africa. Charities and organizations are donating money but there still seems to be a lacking. And much depends on the current state of well-being countries that are able to produce food and the rest of world where improvements in welfare and community level must be made.

Much has changed since the 1800's. In 1830, one person could live on land of 32 acres. Now, one person can live on a piece of land less than 5 acres. Because of overpopulation, food has been not been able to keep up with the increase. More than 75% of a billion people suffer from malnutrition. "Between 1945 and 1990 food production and other human activities degraded nearly three billion acres of vegetated land, an area equal to China and India combined." (WOA). Population increases 1.5% every year while grain output only increases by 1.1% each year. With food falling every year, countries must make a decisive choice regarding the issue of overpopulation.

Many countries have not taken a critical stand in this issue. The U.S. and other powerful world leaders have been doing their best in aiding the needy and supplying food. Growing more crops and sharing food to neighboring and needy countries would bring stability and less food shortages to countries. In the end, many countries would benefit from this help being able to stabilize their issue of food shortages in their country.

(Note: Keep in mind of historic problems and countries with recognition.)

Committee Mission:

In an attempt to resolve the problem of food shortages, accounts of religious views and economy must be put into play. The ultimate goal is to reduce the number of countries with food shortage problem. However, before assessing the problem, a plan must be made on how to engage this issue. Not planning a route may be dangerous when dealing with this problem.

It must be kept in mind that this issue is beneficial to countries all around the world. Not taking a stand on this issue will restrict how the committee acts and create problems. The stand of this committee is to determine how to reduce the number of countries that are being economically and morally downed by global food shortages. However, delegate must acknowledge the fact of the rising tensions of food shortages mainly from Asia and Africa.

The chairs recommend you to contemplate the option of sending food and sending workers to needy countries. We urge you to have an organized committee for crisis like food shortages and a plan to carry out and discuss with participating countries. There are many options that can be formulated and there is



much encouragement to participate and argue with countries on your position. Third-world countries, if not helped, would be put in jeopardizing situations and face devastating losses; it is up for your country to make a stand.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is your nation concerned with the issue of overpopulation and food crisis?
2. Has your country experienced overpopulation? If so, what were some of the problems you experienced?
3. What is your nation's records on food crises? What kind of regulations does your country have to prevent such problems?
4. Does your country plan on helping needy nations? If so, how do you plan to do this?

Sources:

- Time Magazine
- United Nations
- BBC News
- CIA World Fact book
- Population Reference Bureau
- Oxfam International
- http://articles.cnn.com/2009-08-12/tech/world.population_1_fertility-rates-world-population-data-sheet-population-reference-bureau?_s=PM:TECH
- <http://www.guilfordian.com/world-nation/record-breaking-famine-rocks-east-africa-1.2571454>
- http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2011-09/03/content_13610282.htm
- <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/09/02/libya.war/>