

AFRICAN UNION

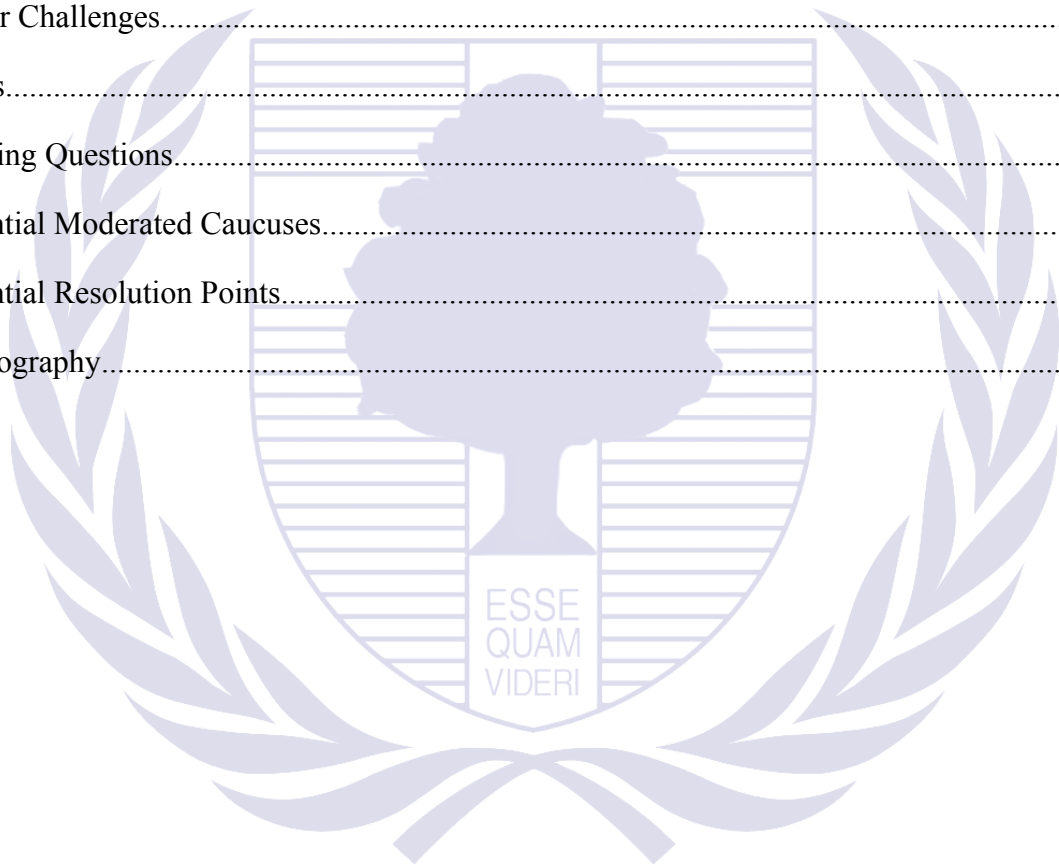
Topic 2: “The impact of climate change on food security and water scarcity”



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Definitions of Key Concepts

These are some terms that we recommend you understand and research prior to the MUN to have a better understanding of our debate. They may vary depending on your country's ideology.

Food Security: A situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

Water Scarcity: A condition in which the aggregate impact of all users impinges on the supply or quality of water under prevailing institutional arrangements to the extent that the demand by all sectors, including the environment, cannot be satisfied fully.

Climate Adaptation: The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects, in order to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM): A process which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land, and related resources, in order to maximise economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems.

Climate-Security Nexus: The interconnection between climate change (e.g., drought, water stress, food insecurity) and security outcomes (e.g., conflict, insurgency, instability) - the idea that environmental stresses can exacerbate or trigger security challenges.

Military coups: An illegal and open attempt by a military organization to unseat an incumbent person or leadership.

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Background Information

The Sahel region, spanning from Senegal to Sudan, faces a severe convergence of political instability, terrorism, and environmental stress. Over the past decade, extremist groups such as Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) have expanded across Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, exploiting weak governance, poverty, and porous borders. These insurgencies have caused widespread displacement and hindered economic development.

The resulting insecurity has contributed to a series of **military coups**, most notably in Mali (2020, 2021), Burkina Faso (2022), and Niger (2023). Military leaders have justified these takeovers as responses to corruption and ineffective civilian governments, but they have instead deepened instability and strained relations with the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Simultaneously, **climate change** has intensified existing vulnerabilities. Rising temperatures and irregular rainfall have reduced agricultural productivity and access to water, driving competition between farmers and herders. This has increased local conflicts and migration across borders, linking environmental degradation to regional security challenges.

Despite initiatives such as the AU's *Silencing the Guns*, the *UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel*, and the *Great Green Wall*, implementation remains limited due to poor coordination, inadequate funding, and fragile state institutions. Without a unified **peace framework** addressing both governance and climate resilience, the Sahel risks further deterioration, threatening regional stability and human security.

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Case Study

Lake Chad Basin ([LINK](#))

Historically, Lake Chad covered around 26,000 km² in the 1960s, but by the 1990s its surface area had fallen to less than 2,000 km², which represents a decline of over 90%. The region is heavily dependent on agriculture, livestock, and fishing for livelihoods, and as water and pasture resources declined, competition between farmers and herders intensified.

Climate-related impacts include increased temperature, erratic rainfall, and changing hydrology, and these factors, combined with governance weaknesses and insurgent activity (e.g., Boko Haram), create deep food security and displacement threats. Climate change amplifies resource stress and livelihood vulnerability, and in the Lake Chad Basin, the dramatic reduction in water and pasture resources has undermined the ability of farming and pastoral communities to sustain themselves, increasing food insecurity and fuelling migration.

Resource scarcity drives conflict and displacement, because as access to water, land, and pasture became more limited, tensions between communities (farmers vs herders) rose, and armed groups capitalised on these vulnerabilities, linking ecological stress to insecurity. Integrated responses are required because ensuring water and food security in the Lake Chad region requires coordinated efforts in climate adaptation, effective governance, and regional cooperation, as isolated measures have proven ineffective. Data and institutions lag behind complexity, because many responses in the basin have been reactive (humanitarian aid, military security) rather than proactive climate-resilience and development frameworks, and stronger institutions and monitoring systems are needed.

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Key Actors & Stakeholders

Note: While this section might be more helpful for the delegates representing these specific countries, everyone should read this to be aware of which nations have similar politics to yours. This way, you will know who you can form alliances with.

1. Egypt:

Egypt is one of Africa's most water-stressed nations, relying on the **Nile River for over 95 percent of its freshwater supply**. Rapid population growth and upstream projects such as Ethiopia's **Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)** have made transboundary water governance a national security priority. Cairo advocates for equitable, legally binding water sharing agreements under the **Nile Basin Initiative**, while also investing in desalination, wastewater recycling, and climate smart agriculture to offset scarcity. Egypt has positioned itself as a continental leader in climate diplomacy, hosting **COP27 (2022)** and supporting AU coordination on adaptation financing and renewable energy transitions.

2. Ethiopia:

Ethiopia represents the dual challenge of pursuing development while managing regional water tensions. As the source of the **Blue Nile**, the construction of the GERD aims to expand electricity access for over 60 million citizens and boost irrigation capacity. Domestically, the government's **Climate-Resilient Green Economy Strategy (2020-2030)** targets reforestation and sustainable agriculture to combat soil erosion and drought. However, variable rainfall and recurring food shortages, particularly in the Somali and Afar regions continue to threaten rural livelihoods. Ethiopia's experience underscores the balance between national growth, hydropower development, and regional cooperation.

3. Kenya:

Kenya is a regional model for integrating **climate adaptation, food security, and water management** into national planning. Through the **National Drought Management Authority (NDMA)** and the **Vision 2030 Green Economy Strategy**, Kenya has developed one of Africa's most advanced drought early-warning systems, helping to mitigate crises in arid northern counties. The country is also expanding irrigation along the Tana and Athi rivers and investing in renewable energy (particularly geothermal) to secure sustainable water pumping for agriculture. Kenya's leadership in hosting the **UNEP headquarters (Nairobi)** reinforces its role as a diplomatic and technical hub for African climate resilience.

4. Nigeria:

As Africa's most populous country, Nigeria faces intensifying **food and water insecurity** driven by desertification in the north, floods in the south, and erratic rainfall nationwide. The drying of **Lake Chad** has devastated livelihoods for over 30 million people, fueling migration and conflict between farmers and herders. Nigeria leads the **Lake Chad Basin Commission's** restoration efforts and has committed to reforesting 4 million hectares under the **Great Green Wall Initiative**. The government's **National Adaptation Plan (2022)** emphasizes sustainable irrigation, early-warning data, and youth employment in climate-smart agriculture to enhance national food resilience.

5. South Africa:

South Africa exemplifies how industrial and urban water demand can collide with climate variability. Severe droughts, most notably the **2018 "Day Zero" crisis in Cape Town**, highlighted the vulnerability of major cities to water shortages. In response, Pretoria implemented the **National Water and Sanitation Master Plan (2019)** and is advancing large-scale desalination and water-recycling projects. As a member of **SADC**, South Africa also promotes transboundary management of the **Orange-Senqu** and **Limpopo** river basins. Its agricultural and industrial strength gives it a central role in shaping the AU's continent-wide policies on sustainable resource use and green economic growth.

6. Niger:

Niger lies at the heart of the **Sahel**, where climate change, desertification, and population growth converge. Over 80 percent of its population relies on subsistence farming, yet recurring droughts and erratic rainfall have reduced yields and worsened food insecurity. The Nigerien government collaborates with the **African Development Bank** and **ECOWAS** on the **Integrated Water Resources Management Programme** and promotes local reforestation under the **African Great Green Wall**. Niger's experience illustrates the link between environmental stress, displacement, and security risks, making it a crucial actor in AU climate-security discussions.

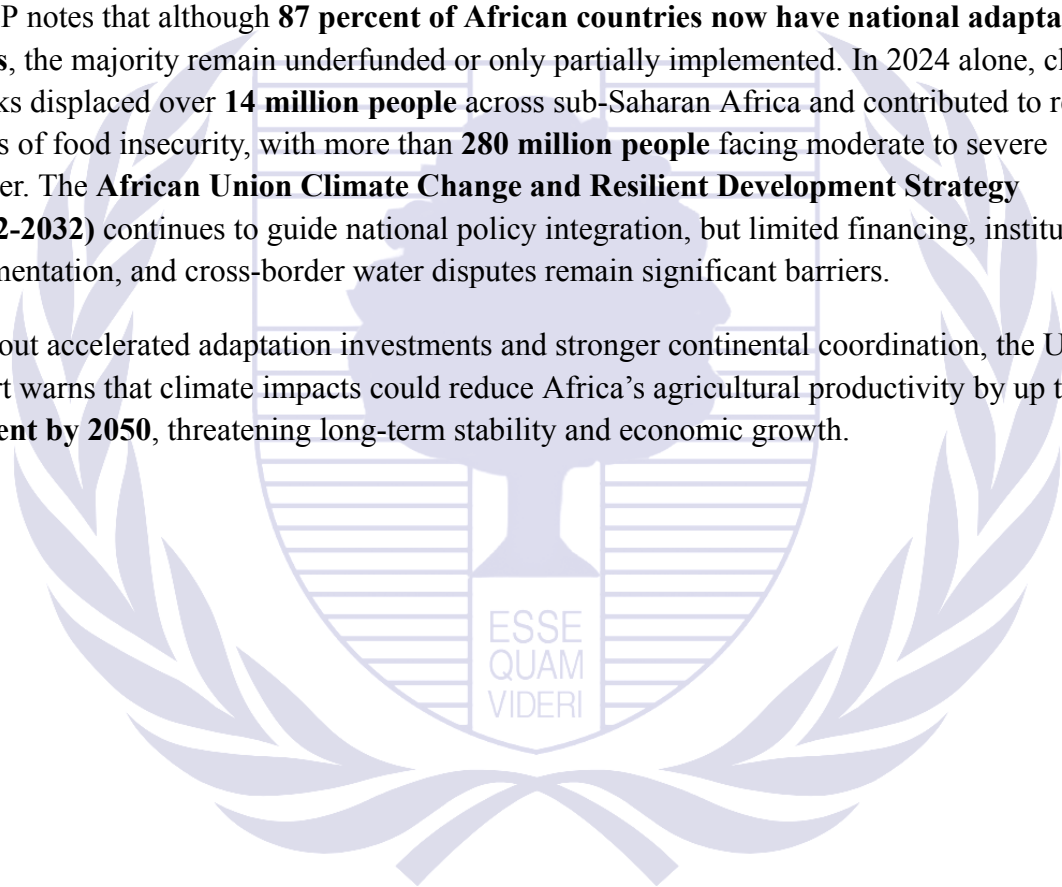
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Current State as of 2025

As of 2025, Africa faces mounting challenges at the intersection of climate change, food security, and water scarcity. Rising temperatures and prolonged droughts have intensified agricultural losses across the Sahel, Horn of Africa, and Southern Africa, while flooding events in Central and West Africa have destroyed infrastructure and cropland. According to the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Adaptation Gap Report 2024**, the continent's adaptation needs are estimated at **US \$52-86 billion annually by 2030**, yet current adaptation finance flows meet **less than 20 percent** of those requirements.

UNEP notes that although **87 percent of African countries now have national adaptation plans**, the majority remain underfunded or only partially implemented. In 2024 alone, climate shocks displaced over **14 million people** across sub-Saharan Africa and contributed to record levels of food insecurity, with more than **280 million people** facing moderate to severe hunger. The **African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy (2022-2032)** continues to guide national policy integration, but limited financing, institutional fragmentation, and cross-border water disputes remain significant barriers.

Without accelerated adaptation investments and stronger continental coordination, the UNEP report warns that climate impacts could reduce Africa's agricultural productivity by up to **30 percent by 2050**, threatening long-term stability and economic growth.



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Major Challenges

1. **Insufficient Climate Financing and Investment**

Africa faces an annual adaptation funding gap of **over \$40 billion** (AfDB 2024).

Many AU member states rely heavily on external donors, leaving national programs under resourced and reactive rather than preventive.

2. **Weak Governance and Policy Coordination**

Fragmented institutions and overlapping mandates between the agriculture, water, and environment ministries hinder effective action. Only 17 AU member states have fully implemented IWRM frameworks.

3. **Population Growth and Urban Pressure**

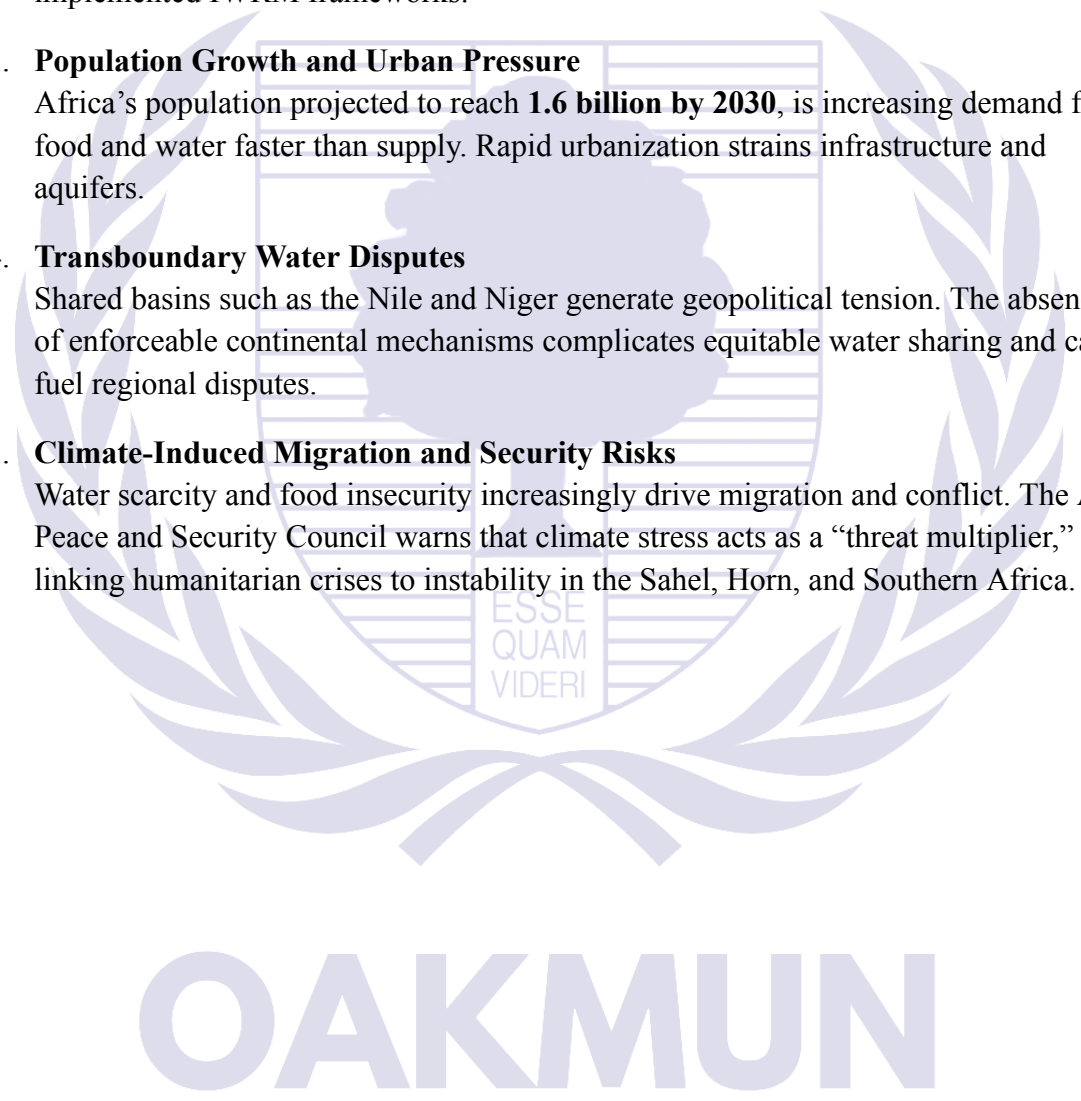
Africa's population projected to reach **1.6 billion by 2030**, is increasing demand for food and water faster than supply. Rapid urbanization strains infrastructure and aquifers.

4. **Transboundary Water Disputes**

Shared basins such as the Nile and Niger generate geopolitical tension. The absence of enforceable continental mechanisms complicates equitable water sharing and can fuel regional disputes.

5. **Climate-Induced Migration and Security Risks**

Water scarcity and food insecurity increasingly drive migration and conflict. The AU Peace and Security Council warns that climate stress acts as a “threat multiplier,” linking humanitarian crises to instability in the Sahel, Horn, and Southern Africa.



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Blocs

1. ECOWAS Member States

Overview:

This bloc consists of member states of the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) which plays a central role in coordinating political stability, economic integration, and regional responses to climate-related food insecurity and water scarcity. ECOWAS countries generally support African Union and regional frameworks, collective decision-making, and multilateral approaches to development and climate adaptation.

Interests:

- Strengthening regional cooperation on food security, agriculture, and water management.
- Supporting AU (and ECOWAS) led mechanisms to address climate shocks and humanitarian crises.
- Expanding access to international climate finance through coordinated regional programmes.
- Promoting cross-border infrastructure, early-warning systems, and sustainable agriculture.

Example Countries:

- **Nigeria** - leads regional initiatives on Lake Chad restoration and food security
- **Senegal** - advocates climate adaptation and coastal resilience through ECOWAS frameworks
- **Ghana** - supports agricultural modernisation and regional food systems
- **Côte d'Ivoire** - focuses on climate-resilient agriculture and regional economic stability

2. The Alliance of Sahel States (AES)

Overview:

This bloc includes Sahelin countries currently governed by military regimes that have distanced themselves from **ECOWAS** and, in some cases, the African Union. These states prioritise national sovereignty, security, and domestic control over resources, and often view external political conditionality as a threat to stability.

Interests:

- Defending national sovereignty over food systems, land, and water resources.
- Framing climate change as a security issue linked to instability and conflict.
- Rejecting sanctions or political conditions tied to climate and development assistance.
- Prioritising nationally controlled adaptation strategies and bilateral partnerships.

Example Countries:

- **Mali** - emphasises sovereign control over food production and security-linked adaptation
- **Burkina Faso** - links climate stress to internal displacement and security challenges
- **Niger** - focuses on domestic management of food insecurity and water scarcity in the Sahel

3. Eastern and Southern Africa Development-Focused States

Overview:

This bloc includes Eastern and Southern African countries that prioritise long-term development infrastructure investment, and institutional climate adaptation. These states generally support African Union coordination and multilateral climate frameworks while emphasising national implementation strategies.

Interests:

- Investing in large-scale irrigation, hydropower, and water infrastructure.
- Promoting climate-resilient agriculture and food systems.
- Supporting AU-led climate strategies and regional cooperation.
- Managing transboundary water resources through diplomacy and planning.

Example Countries:

- **Kenya** - integrates climate adaptation into national development planning
- **Egypt** - prioritises water security and large-scale infrastructure
- **Ethiopia** - emphasises hydropower and agricultural expansion
- **South Africa** - focuses on long-term water security and resilience planning



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Guiding Questions

1. How can the African Union strengthen the implementation of the Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy (2022-2032) to ensure that all member states integrate food and water security into national policies?
2. How can shared basins be protected from conflict over their resources?
3. How can the AU facilitate sustainable financing for projects in agriculture and irrigation, while reducing dependency on external financing?
4. What innovative technological solutions can enhance continental food and water resilience?



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Potential Moderated Caucuses

During moderated caucuses, your aim should be to propose topics that your delegation believes are important to discuss. These caucuses could be focused on the entire topic, which would make the debate more general, or they could be focused on a specific topic instead.

Remember that during the moderated caucus, as well as in consultations of the whole, delegations are guiding the debate and choosing what should be discussed, so your aim as a delegation should be to propose topics relevant to your country, as well as participate in any debate in order to express your country's position.

Furthermore, remember that if you have planned any topic for a moderated caucus or a consultation of the whole, you should also think about the speaker's time, as well as the duration of the motion.

Some examples of topics that could be discussed are the following (the following topics can be used):

Food Security

- Should governments prioritize being food self-sufficient over reliance on imports as climate impacts intensify?
- Should countries very vulnerable to climate change receive international support to prevent famine during climate disasters?
- How can food security be achieved? By changing current agricultural practices that contribute to emissions and deforestation?

Water Scarcity

- Should access to safe water be treated as a human right rather than a policy?
- Should water pricing be used to reduce overconsumption, even if it risks limiting its access to impoverished communities?
- Should governments restrict water-intensive agriculture in areas that suffer from severe droughts?

Agriculture Adaptations

- Should subsidies be redirected away from water-intensive crops toward climate-resilient farming methods?
- Should drought-resistant genetically modified crops be promoted as a necessary adaptation tool?
- Can smallholder farmers adapt to climate change without major international financing and technology transfer?

Climate Justice and Responsibility

- Should high-emitting countries be required to fund adaptation measures for food and water systems in low-emitting, high-risk countries?

- Should “loss and damage” include compensation for long-term declines in agricultural productivity and freshwater availability?
- Is it fair to impose climate-related conditions on aid to countries facing extreme hunger and water crises?
- Should the international framework include water and food security as core priorities?



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Potential Resolution Points

When writing resolutions, your aim should be to reflect the position of your bloc. Through the clauses written, for the preambular clauses, your aim should be to describe the position of your bloc on the subject. If your bloc's stance is in favor of preserving freedoms, then the preambular clauses should reflect that. However, the Operative Clauses have to be focused on the specific measures your bloc believes should be implemented.

Below, you will find some examples of operative clauses for your resolutions. Although you cannot copy and paste the clauses used as examples, it is encouraged to try to use similar language:

Food Security

1. Recommends that Member States strengthen food self-sufficiency to reduce climate-related supply risks.
2. Calls upon the international community to support highly climate-vulnerable countries to prevent famine during climate disasters.
3. Encourages Member States to improve food security by reducing emissions and deforestation from agriculture.

Water Scarcity

1. Urges that access to safe water should be treated as a human right and reflected in national policy.
2. Supports equitable water pricing to reduce overconsumption while protecting impoverished communities.
3. Calls for governments to limit water-intensive agriculture in regions facing severe drought.

Agriculture Adaptations

1. Requests Member States to redirect subsidies toward climate-resilient farming and efficient irrigation.
2. Urges evaluating and, where appropriate, promoting drought-resistant GM crops with strong oversight.
3. Calls upon developed countries and financial institutions to finance and transfer technology to support smallholder adaptation.

Climate Justice and Responsibility

1. Calls upon high-emitting countries to fund adaptation for food and water systems in high-risk, low-emitting states.

2. Urges including long-term losses in agricultural productivity and freshwater availability under “loss and damage.”
3. Condemns imposing climate-related conditions on aid to countries facing immediate hunger and water crises?
4. Requests that international climate and development frameworks prioritize food security and water security.



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