MONMX

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

President: Michelle Salas Bucio

Moderator: Daniela Camacho Canto

Conference Officer: Tania Alejandra Martínez López

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WELCOME LETTER TO DELEGATES

Dear delegates,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the FAO Committee at MUNMX 2025. I feel honored to share this experience with you and to accompany you during these sessions that, without a doubt, will be filled with learning, discussion, and collaboration. Model United Nations is much more than a simulation; it is an opportunity to step into the shoes of world leaders and work together to address global challenges. In our case, we will be focusing on food and agriculture, two areas that are at the heart of human well-being and development.

In this committee, we will briefly approach topics such as food security, the importance of small-scale farmers, and the environmental consequences of agricultural practices. These issues remind us how interconnected the world is and how the actions of one community can have effects across the globe. While the subjects might sound technical or complex, I encourage you to view them as opportunities to explore creative solutions, exchange perspectives, and grow as critical thinkers. What matters most in this room is not perfection, but your willingness to participate, listen, and learn.

One of the greatest strengths of Model UN is the diversity of voices and ideas. Each delegate brings a unique background, culture, and way of seeing the world, and it is precisely this diversity that enriches our discussions. I invite you to take advantage of that, to debate with respect, to collaborate with openness, and to challenge each other in ways that remain constructive.

As your president, my role is to guide you through this process and ensure that your experience is both meaningful and enjoyable. I want you to feel comfortable speaking up, asking questions, and taking risks. Do not hesitate to share your thoughts, even if you are unsure, sometimes the most valuable contributions come from the simplest observations. Remember that this is a space where you can practice diplomacy, negotiation, and leadership, all within an environment of mutual respect.

Let us work with dedication, respect, and creativity, so that when we finish, we can look back proudly on what we accomplished as a team.

Sincerely,

President: Michelle Salas Bucio

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ABOUT THE COMMITTEE.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations dedicated to leading international efforts to defeat hunger, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture. Established on October 16, 1945, in Quebec City, Canada, the FAO's mission is to raise levels of nutrition and standards of living, improve agricultural productivity, and enhance the conditions of rural populations. Today, the organization has 195 members, including 194 countries and the European Union, and operates in over 130 countries worldwide to address global challenges related to food insecurity, malnutrition, and environmental sustainability.

Headquartered in Rome, Italy, the FAO maintains a network of regional, subregional, and country offices to implement its programs and initiatives effectively. The organization is governed by the FAO Conference, which meets every two years to review policy issues, and the Executive Council, which oversees its implementation.

FAO addresses a broad range of issues related to food and agriculture, focusing on ensuring that all people have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food, promoting sustainable farming practices, and enhancing the livelihoods of rural populations. It also works to mitigate the impacts of climate change on agriculture, encourage responsible use of natural resources, and foster innovation and technology to increase agricultural productivity and resilience. Among its priorities is supporting small-scale farmers, who form a large portion of food producers worldwide and face challenges such as unpredictable weather, soil degradation, and limited access to resources. By empowering these farmers, FAO helps build resilient food systems and protect natural ecosystems.

The FAO has contributed to major international initiatives, including the creation of the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which are central to combating hunger and poverty globally. Its work aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 2, which aims to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture. Through policy development, technical expertise, and capacity-building programs, FAO fosters collaboration among governments, civil society, and the private sector to create solutions that benefit people and the planet alike.

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Topic A: Empowering Small-Scale Farmers to Reduce the Impact of Climate Change on Food Production

Small-scale farmers are central to global food systems, producing around 30% of the world's food on just a fraction of available agricultural land (FAO, 2014). Yet, they are also the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, facing increasingly frequent droughts, floods, and shifting rainfall patterns that directly threaten yields. A 2023 report by the Climate Policy Initiative revealed that smallholder farmers receive less than 4% of climate finance directed toward agriculture, leaving them without the necessary resources to adapt and safeguard production. This lack of investment is particularly concerning given that the World Bank projects food demand will rise by 70% by 2050, a target that cannot be met without strengthening the resilience of small producers.

The risks are already visible. In 2021, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO) highlighted that limited access to climate information services reduces productivity and income among small-scale producers. In Nigeria, for instance, worsening drought and water scarcity in 2025 have disrupted crop cycles and accelerated food insecurity, according to the Associated Press. Similarly, case studies in East Africa and South Asia show that farmers with no access to drought-resistant seeds or weather advisory systems are more likely to lose entire harvests. Scholars argue that empowering these farmers with climate-smart tools, sustainable irrigation, and financial support is not only a matter of equity but also of global food security.

Moreover, climate change is dramatically deepening food prices globally. Experts warn that without expanded adaptation finance, food inflation may surge as much as 50% by 2035 and reach 200% by 2060, severely affecting vulnerable communities and smallholder farmers (Le Monde)

The situation of small-scale farmers reflects the close link between agriculture, climate, and global food security. Their challenges remind us of the fragility of food systems and the importance of recognizing their role in sustaining communities worldwide.

Key Questions:

- How has climate change specifically impacted small-scale farmers in terms of productivity, resilience, and access to resources?

- In what ways does the excessive use of agrochemicals contribute to environmental degradation, such as soil contamination, and how does this affect long-term food security?

- What are the main barriers that small-scale farmers face in adapting to changing climatic conditions?

- How do regional differences (e.g., Africa, Asia, Latin America) shape the vulnerabilities of small-scale farmers to climate change?

- What role does international cooperation and knowledge-sharing play in supporting sustainable agricultural practices among smallholder farmers?

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Topic B: Environmental Impact of Excessive Use of Agrochemicals. Soil Contamination

The environmental impact of the excessive use of agrochemicals is one of the most pressing challenges facing agriculture and food systems today. Agrochemicals, including synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides, were introduced in the mid-20th century to increase yields and control pests, especially during the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. While their use initially brought significant benefits to global food production, the overreliance on these substances has created profound long-term consequences. Soil, one of the most vital natural resources, is at the center of this issue. Studies conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 2021 revealed that global pesticide use increased by approximately 75% between 2000 and 2017, while synthetic nitrogen fertilizer application reached over 109 million tonnes in 2018. This has contributed directly to widespread soil contamination and degradation, with nearly 33% of the world's soils already reported as moderately to highly degraded.

Soil contamination caused by agrochemicals is not limited to nutrient imbalances but extends to deeper ecological disruptions. Fertilizer overuse often leads to the accumulation of nitrogen and phosphorus, which disrupts soil chemistry and reduces its natural ability to regulate nutrients. In parallel, pesticide residues, many of which remain in soils for decades, alter the composition of microbial communities essential for soil fertility. Research shows that over 95% of herbicides and 98% of insecticides used in agriculture impact organisms other than their intended targets, meaning they directly harm beneficial microorganisms that sustain soil ecosystems. These disruptions reduce biodiversity, weaken nutrient cycles, and leave soils more vulnerable to erosion and further degradation.

Ultimately, the environmental impact of agrochemical overuse underscores the fragility of soil systems. Once contaminated, soils are difficult and costly to restore, making prevention and awareness crucial. The long-term effects observed today reflect decades of unsustainable practices, reminding the international community of the urgent need to recognize soil as a finite and non-renewable resource that sustains life on Earth.

Key Questions:

- How have global trends in pesticide and fertilizer use since the early 2000s shaped current soil contamination levels?

- What ecological consequences arise from the fact that over 95% of herbicides and 98% of insecticides affect non-target organisms?

- How does the persistence of legacy agrochemicals like DDT illustrate the long-term risks of soil contamination?

- In what ways does agrochemical-driven soil contamination disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, particularly women and rural communities?

- How does soil degradation threaten the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals related to food security, health, and the environment?

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Upload your position paper via the following link. Deadline: October 8th

Position Paper Folder

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Michelle Salas - President