



UNIS-UN 2009

The Food Crisis: A Global Challenge

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PRESS RELEASE:

2009 UNIS-UN Conference “Food Crisis: A Global Challenge”

The theme of the 33rd annual UNIS-UN Conference (United Nations International School-United Nations) is “The Food Crisis: A Global Challenge.” The conference will be held on Thursday and Friday, March 5th and 6th, 2009, in the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations.

According to the World Food Programme (WFP), a United Nations Agency, the total number of undernourished people worldwide has increased from 854 million to 923 million over the past five years. Victims of poverty and thus of malnourishment are not able to consume the recommended 2,100 calories per day. The WFP states that “today, one in nearly seven people do not get enough food to be healthy and lead an active life, making hunger and malnutrition the number one risk to health worldwide – greater than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined.”

The food crisis is becoming increasingly critical in today’s world. Oxfam International recently said that a combination of soaring food prices and the current global financial meltdown have caused an additional 119 million people to live below the poverty line. This crisis has stirred people around the world to find ways to understand and address this situation.

This year’s UNIS-UN conference will focus on the global food crisis and its effects on the socio-economic and political spheres of our world. The goal is to educate youth through critical examination of the causes, effects and potential solutions to the problem and simultaneously allow them to gain a greater insight into this pressing issue. As a result, students are encouraged to take their own initiative to combat this global challenge.

UNIS-UN plans on inviting distinguished speakers who have expertise in different areas of the food crisis and who can contribute to the student’s understanding of this global concern. Along with keynote speakers, there will be a speaker panel, which is a forum for world leaders to discuss and debate the impact of globalization on the ongoing food crisis. Students will have the opportunity to participate in a panel discussion and a debate. For the student panel, participants will explore the weight and impact the increased demand of food has on this crisis. Additionally, for the debate, students will address the following statement: “That the surge in population growth in developing countries is the primary cause of the present food crisis.” Finally, there will be a presentation of student-produced films addressing this year’s key topic.

The UNIS-UN Conference is organized and run by UNIS students in the Upper School (Tutorial House). The UNIS-UN Committee begins preparations for the conference nearly a year in advance, finding and researching a topic of global relevance, drawing up a list of speakers, inviting several hundred students from schools all over the world, managing UNIS Tutorial House debates, and compiling a Working Paper of articles, written and edited by members of the UNIS-UN Committee.

The structure of the UNIS-UN Conference is designed to provide students with expert knowledge through the experience of provocative guest speakers. The conference also endeavors to give students a platform to express and debate their own opinions and views in arguably the most internationally significant gathering place on earth. More than eight hundred students hailing from six continents will attend and the conference will be web cast on both days. By outlining some of the issues that dominate the discussion of the food crisis, the UNIS-UN Committee hopes that this year’s conference will foster greater awareness of world hunger, a subject of significance.

Sincerely,

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