



# “Navigating food security in times of crises in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea regions”

Final report

11. March 2024





# Overview

## Intro

On March 11, 2024, SDSN Youth Mediterranean and SDSN Youth Black Sea jointly organized a virtual Speaking Club event as part of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

This initiative served as a dynamic platform, bringing together students, young innovators, and researchers from the Mediterranean and the Black Sea regions. Together, they fostered an open dialogue on the food security challenges facing these regions, considering the perspectives of climate change and conflict/displacement.

## Aims

Armed conflicts, extreme weather events, escalating inflation, and food poverty are all problems that face the regions of the Mediterranean and Black Sea. Recognizing the gravity of these issues, this speaking club aimed to provide participants with an inclusive and secure platform where they could not only confront these challenges head-on, but also voice their perspectives, exchange experiences, and collectively brainstorm solutions. The event sought to explore the interplay between food security, safety, climate change, and armed conflict, with the goal of contributing to a more sustainable future for both the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions.

Below you can read the main takeaways from the discussions during the webinar. The main issues and practical solutions that participants brilliantly suggested are hereafter presented.

Please note that the following report is based on participants' personal experiences gathered together during the event. The below-mentioned issues and solutions may not apply worldwide at the same level.

## Participation

The event drew more than 100 young leaders from both regions, nearly doubling the attendance compared to the previous speaking club event. We gathered feedback through an online survey distributed after the event. Overall, participants responded positively, finding the discussion engaging, informative, and eye-opening. Additionally, there was interest in extending discussion time so more points could be made, and discussing the SDSN Youth Networks in greater detail.

**The event gathered approximately 100 participants, not exclusively from Mediterranean and Black Sea countries.**





## Issues

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### **Population Growth:**

- The water demand is expected to increase.
- The demand for food also increases.

### **Agricultural Activities and Overexploitation:**

- Intensive farming practices contribute to soil degradation and water pollution.

### **Climate Change:**

- Climate change-induced natural disasters directly impact agricultural productivity and food availability.
- Rising temperatures contribute to reduced crop yields and higher prices.

### **Food Safety and Obesity:**

- Promoting nutritious food options while combating the prevalence of processed foods high in sugars and unhealthy fats is difficult.

### **War and Armed Conflict:**

- Destruction of infrastructure disrupts food distribution, leading to food shortages and price hikes.

### **High Child Mortality Rates:**

- Newborns are particularly affected by food shortages.
- Insufficient access to proper nutrition during critical developmental stages can result in long-term health issues and stunted growth.

### **Armed Conflicts and Migration:**

- Conflict-driven displacement disrupts traditional farming practices and food distribution systems, leading to food shortages.

### **Displaced Individuals Additional Challenges:**

- Lack of access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and healthcare further exacerbates health risks and vulnerabilities.





## Solutions

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### **Clear Plans:**

- Need for well-defined plans and actionable solutions for the near future.
- These plans should be followed diligently.

### **Inform, Educate, and Empower:**

- The goal is to inform, educate, and empower people.
- Accessibility to knowledge and tools is crucial.
- Research and data play a vital role in raising awareness.

### **Collaborative Action:**

- Taking action should be a collaborative effort, not just an individual endeavor.
- Young leaders' participation is key.

### **Accessible Information:**

- It is essential to inform each other and the public.
- Make information accessible to everyone, especially in the food and research sectors.

### **PRIMA Program and Private Sector Participation:**

- The PRIMA program offers solutions.
- Private sector participation in innovation projects is an opportunity.

### **Government-Private Sector Cooperation:**

- Strengthen cooperation between governments and the private sector.

### **Holistic Approach:**

- Avoid focusing solely on one aspect, rather than addressing multiple problems simultaneously to achieve comprehensive goals.

