



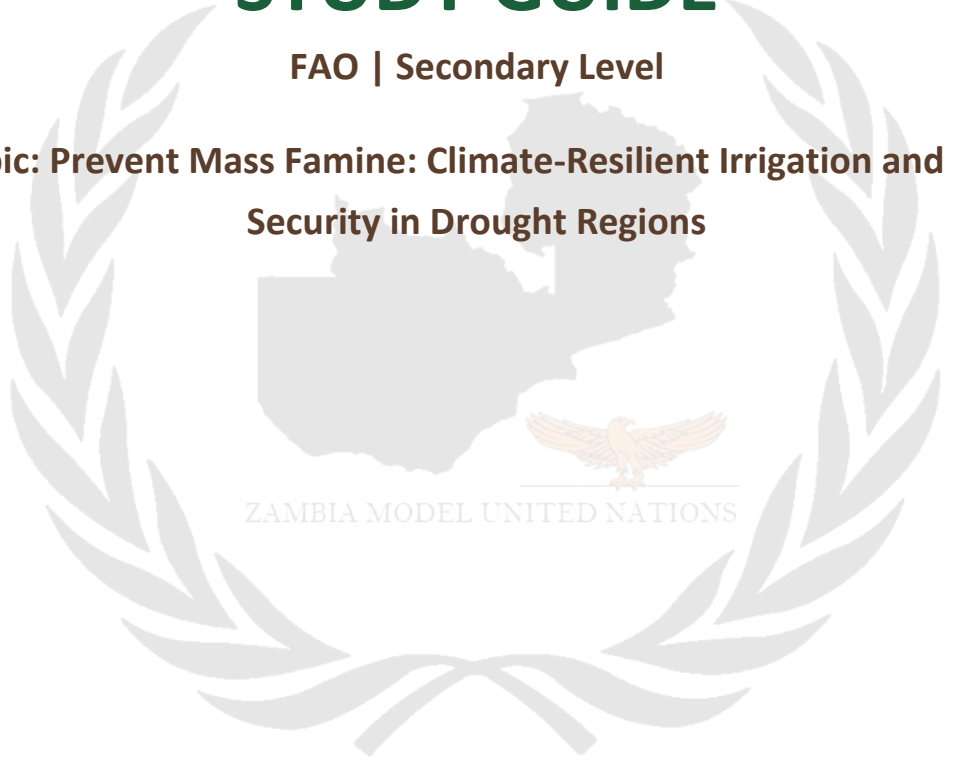
LUSAKA OAKTREE SCHOOL MODEL UNITED NATIONS
LOTSMUN 2026

***Architects of Accountability** • Redefining Power, Peace and Progress*

STUDY GUIDE

FAO | Secondary Level

**Topic: Prevent Mass Famine: Climate-Resilient Irrigation and Soil
Security in Drought Regions**



ZAMBIA MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Message from the Secretary General

Dear Delegates,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to LOTSMUN 2026.

This year, under the theme “Architects of Accountability: Redefining Power, Peace and Progress,” we invite you to consider not only how decisions are made but who is responsible for them, who is affected by them and how meaningful change can be achieved.

Model United Nations is more than an exercise in public speaking. It is an opportunity to understand complex international problems, challenge assumptions, negotiate with people who may disagree with you and transform competing ideas into meaningful solutions.

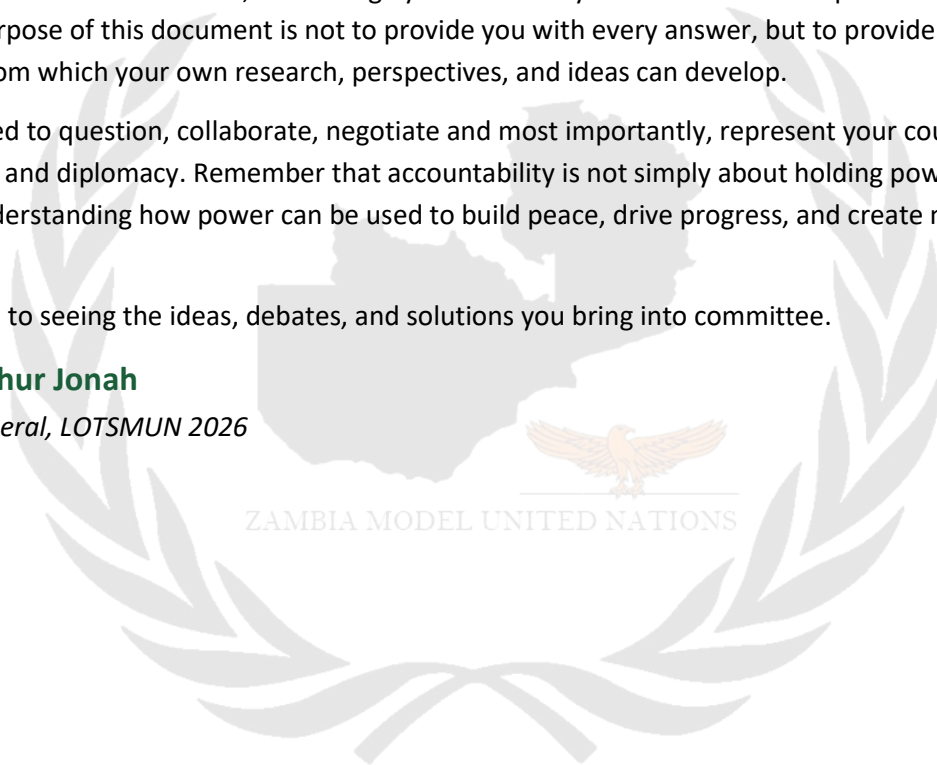
As you prepare for this committee, I encourage you to look beyond the information presented in this study guide. The purpose of this document is not to provide you with every answer, but to provide you with the foundation from which your own research, perspectives, and ideas can develop.

Come prepared to question, collaborate, negotiate and most importantly, represent your country’s position with accuracy and diplomacy. Remember that accountability is not simply about holding power responsible; it is about understanding how power can be used to build peace, drive progress, and create meaningful change.

I look forward to seeing the ideas, debates, and solutions you bring into committee.

Malenji Arthur Jonah

Secretary General, LOTSMUN 2026



ZAMBIA MODEL UNITED NATIONS

1. The Food and Agriculture Organisation

1.1 What is the FAO?

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is the United Nations agency that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. It was established in 1945 in Quebec City by 42 founding member countries, and its headquarters moved to Rome in 1951.¹ Its mandate is to raise levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, improve life in rural areas and free people from hunger.² Its Director-General is Qu Dongyu.³

In this simulation, you are a **member state** at an FAO session. The FAO cannot order governments to act. It provides data, standards and technical help, and it brings countries together, so the choices that member states make decide whether farmers receive support. Here are the bodies and tools you are most likely to cite:

Body or tool	What it does
FAO	Supports countries on food production, soil and water management, and disaster preparedness. ^{4,5}
World Food Programme (WFP)	The UN agency that delivers food in emergencies. It won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020. ⁶
Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)	The system that rates how severe hunger is and confirms when an area is in famine. ⁷
UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)	Works on land, drought and desertification, and reports on land loss. ⁸
Green Climate Fund and UNDP	A climate fund and the UN development programme. Together they back the SCRALA solar irrigation project in Zambia. ⁹

¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. From post-war resolve to a shared future of food security (Director-General, 2025). <https://www.fao.org/director-general/news/2025/post-war-resolve-food-security-future/en>

² Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. From post-war resolve to a shared... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. From post-war resolve to a shared... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. From post-war resolve to a shared... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization. Healthy soils for a healthy people and planet: FAO calls for reversal of soil degradation. <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/agriculture-soils-degradation-fao-gffa-2022/en>

⁶ Nobel Prize. World Food Programme (WFP): facts, Nobel Peace Prize 2020. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2020/wfp/facts/>

⁷ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). Famine facts. <https://www.ipcinfo.org/famine-facts/en/>

⁸ UN Convention to Combat Desertification. At least 100 million hectares of healthy land now lost each year (press release, 24 October 2023). <https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/press-releases/least-100-million-hectares-healthy-land-now-lost-each-year>

⁹ UNDP Zambia. Tackling water scarcity with innovative irrigation solutions (SCRALA project, Chirundu district). <https://www.undp.org/zambia/blog/tackling-water-scarcity-innovative-irrigation-solutions>

2. Introduction to the Topic

This topic is about preventing **famine**, the most extreme form of hunger, in regions where **drought** threatens harvests. It looks at two protective strategies. **Climate-resilient irrigation** means delivering water to crops in ways that keep working as rainfall becomes less predictable, without exhausting the water source. **Soil security** means keeping soils healthy, fertile and protected so that they can keep growing food.

Here is one way the problem develops:



This is a simplified picture. Famine usually has several causes, and not every drought leads to famine. The 2026 Global Report on Food Crises said famine was confirmed in 2025 in Gaza and parts of Sudan, where conflict was a major driver.¹⁰ This committee concentrates on the **drought and farming** side, and delegates should say clearly when conflict or access is the real obstacle.

2.1 The scale of the problem

Hunger. In 2025, about **645 million people**, 7.8% of the world, faced hunger, 14 million fewer than in 2024. In Africa, 309 million people, 20.0% of the population, were hungry.¹¹

Land and soil. FAO's 2025 land and water report says more than 60% of the 1.6 billion hectares of degraded land is agricultural.¹² About 25 to 40 billion tonnes of topsoil are lost every year, and in many African countries more nutrients are taken from the soil than are put back.¹³ At least 100 million hectares of healthy land are lost each year.¹⁴

645 million people faced hunger in 2025 (SOFI 2026)	1.6 billion hectares of land are degraded, over 60% of it agricultural	72% of global freshwater withdrawals go to agriculture
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¹⁰ UN News. Two-thirds of global hunger concentrated in 10 conflict-hit countries (2026 Global Report on Food Crises, April 2026). <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/04/1167374>

¹¹ World Health Organization, with FAO and partners. UN report: Global hunger levels ease for third consecutive year as regional disparities persist (State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2026, 21 July 2026). <https://www.who.int/news/item/21-07-2026-un-report--global-hunger-levels-ease-for-third-consecutive-year-as-regional-disparities-persist>

¹² Down To Earth. FAO report: farmland expansion no longer viable amid global water and land crisis (State of the World's Land and Water Resources 2025). <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/agriculture/expanding-agricultural-area-no-longer-viable-report>

¹³ FAO. Soils are endangered, but the degradation can be rolled back. <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/Soils-are-endangered-but-the-degradation-can-be-rolled-back/>

¹⁴ UN Convention to Combat Desertification. At least 100 million hectares of healthy land now lost... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

Water. Agriculture accounts for 72% of global freshwater withdrawals, and renewable water per person fell by 7% in a decade, with Northern Africa and Western Asia the most stressed.^{15,16} Irrigated cropland doubled to 23% of all cropland between 1964 and 2023, yet around 35 sub-Saharan African countries irrigate less than 1% of their farmland.^{17,18} FAO says expanding farmland is no longer viable and that the world must instead close yield gaps and use resources more efficiently.¹⁹

2.3 Ideas, tools and frameworks to know

Governments and farmers already use many tools. These are the ones delegates are most likely to cite:

Idea or tool	What it is
Drip and solar irrigation	Delivering water slowly to plant roots, powered by the sun. FAO calls the goal “more crop per drop”, and solar pumps can avoid costly diesel or grid electricity. ^{20,21}
Conservation agriculture	Three principles: minimal soil disturbance, permanent soil cover and crop rotation, so that soil is protected and holds water. ²²
Farmer-managed natural regeneration (FMNR)	Farmers protect and grow trees from stumps already in their fields, which gives shade, protects soil and can raise yields. ²³
Water governance	Rules, permits and monitoring that stop farmers withdrawing more from underground supplies than nature can refill. ²⁴
Soil management priorities	FAO’s priorities: limit further degradation, stabilise soil organic matter, stabilise or reduce nitrogen and phosphorus use, and improve soil monitoring. ²⁵

Theme link: Architects of Accountability

Accountability is the heart of this topic. Who is responsible for making sure a farmer has water and healthy soil before drought strikes: national governments, donors, climate funds, companies or communities? A strong resolution names who must act, what they must deliver and how the world will check that they did.

¹⁵ Down To Earth. FAO report: farmland expansion no longer viable amid global water and land... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

¹⁶ FAO. Renewable water availability per person plunges 7 percent in a decade as global scarcity deepens (AQUASTAT, 12 December 2025). <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/renewable-water-availability-per-person-plunges-7-percent-in-a-decade-as-global-scarcity-deepens-fao-data-shows/en>

¹⁷ Down To Earth. FAO report: farmland expansion no longer viable amid global water and land... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

¹⁸ UN News. UN sounds alarm over rising demands on water resources as scarcity deepens (FAO land and water report, December 2025). <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/12/1166582>

¹⁹ Down To Earth. FAO report: farmland expansion no longer viable amid global water and land... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²⁰ FAO Regional Office for Africa. Solar irrigation can unlock Sahel’s water resources for agricultural growth. <https://www.fao.org/africa/news-stories/news-detail/solar-irrigation-can-unlock-sahel-s-water-resources-for-agricultural-growth/en>

²¹ UNDP Zambia. Tackling water scarcity with innovative irrigation solutions (SCRALA project... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²² Food and Agriculture Organization. Conservation agriculture. <https://www.fao.org/conservation-agriculture/en/>

²³ World Agroforestry (ICRAF). Niger’s re-greening revolution. <https://www.worldagroforestry.org/news/niger%E2%80%99s-re-greening-revolution>

²⁴ FAO Regional Office for Africa. Solar irrigation can unlock Sahel’s water resources for... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²⁵ FAO. Soils are endangered, but the degradation can be rolled back... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

3. Key Definitions

These definitions are adapted from the UN, FAO and IPC sources listed in the bibliography. Learn them, because you will use them in speeches and clauses.

Term	Meaning
Food security	When all people, at all times, have access to enough safe and nutritious food.
Food insecurity	Lack of regular access to enough safe and nutritious food.
Malnutrition	A lack of, or imbalance in, the food and nutrients the body needs.
Wasting	Low weight for height in children, often from acute food shortage or illness. The IPC uses it as a famine indicator. ²⁶
Famine	The most extreme level of food insecurity, confirmed when the IPC's food, malnutrition and mortality thresholds are all reached. ²⁷
Risk of famine	A warning that famine could occur, even if it is not the most likely outcome. ²⁸
IPC Phase 5	The highest level on the IPC scale, used for catastrophe and famine. ^{29,30}
Drought	A prolonged period of much lower rainfall than normal, which dries out soils, rivers and water supplies.
Climate-resilient	Able to keep working or recover quickly when the climate becomes harsher or less predictable.
Irrigation	Supplying water to crops by canals, pipes, pumps or other means, instead of relying on rain.
Drip irrigation	Delivering water slowly to plant roots through pipes to reduce waste. ³¹
Groundwater	Water stored underground in soil and rock, reached through wells and boreholes.
Over-extraction	Withdrawing more water from an aquifer than nature can refill. ³²
Water stress	When water withdrawals approach or exceed the renewable supply. ³³
Soil security	Keeping soil healthy, protected and able to grow food now and in the future.

²⁶ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). Famine facts... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²⁷ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). Famine facts... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²⁸ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). Famine facts... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²⁹ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). Famine facts... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³⁰ UNICEF. Famine conditions confirmed in Sudan's Al Fasher and Kadugli but hunger and malnutrition ease where conflict subsides (IPC, 4 November 2025). <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/famine-conditions-confirmed-sudans-al-fasher-and-kadugli-hunger-and-malnutrition>

³¹ FAO Regional Office for Africa. Solar irrigation can unlock Sahel's water resources for... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

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³³ FAO. Renewable water availability per person plunges 7 percent in a decade as global scarcity... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

Term	Meaning
Soil degradation	Damage that reduces soil's ability to grow food, through erosion, salinisation, compaction, acidification or pollution. ³⁴
Salinisation	Salt build-up in soil that harms crops, especially in badly managed irrigated land. ³⁵
Desertification	Land degradation in dry areas that turns productive land into something closer to desert. ³⁶
Conservation agriculture	Farming that disturbs soil as little as possible, keeps it covered and rotates crops. ³⁷
Smallholder farmer	A farmer who works a small area, usually with family labour.
Yield gap	The difference between the harvest farmers get and what they could get with better methods and inputs. ³⁸
Early warning	Information that alerts people to an approaching disaster so they can act sooner.
Humanitarian assistance	Food, water, health care and other help for people in emergencies.
Accountability	Making sure that people and institutions answer for what they do, through reporting, checks and remedies.



³⁴ FAO. Soils are endangered, but the degradation can be rolled back... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization. Healthy soils for a healthy people and planet: FAO calls for... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³⁶ UN Convention to Combat Desertification. At least 100 million hectares of healthy land now lost... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³⁷ Food and Agriculture Organization. Conservation agriculture... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³⁸ Down To Earth. FAO report: farmland expansion no longer viable amid global water and land... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

4. Case Studies

These cases show the problems and some responses in real life. Facts come from the sources in the bibliography. Numbers are estimates and may change, so check dates and methods. **You must represent your assigned country's view.**

4.1 Zambia: the driest season in over 40 years

In 2023/2024 Zambia had its driest season in more than 40 years. The UN said over nine million people in 84 of Zambia's 117 districts were affected, and about 982,765 of 2,272,931 hectares of maize planted were destroyed. Cereal production was forecast to fall by nearly 50%.³⁹ President Hichilema declared a national emergency on 1 March 2024, citing effects on agriculture, water and energy.⁴⁰

4.2 Chirundu, Zambia: solar drip irrigation

In June 2024 a 20-hectare solar-powered drip irrigation scheme was launched in Tauya village, Chirundu district. It is part of SCRALA, funded by the Green Climate Fund and led by Zambia's Ministry of Agriculture and UNDP, with FAO, WFP and others supporting. The project works with smallholders in 16 districts and plans to be replicated.⁴¹

4.3 Niger: regenerating trees to protect crops

In southern Niger, farmers kept five or more of the strongest stems on tree stumps in their fields. Over about 20 years, around 5 million hectares in Maradi and Zinder gained medium to high tree cover. Millet yields rose from about 150 kg per hectare to over 500 kg without mineral fertiliser.⁴²

4.4 Somalia: the cost of repeated drought

A study by Somalia's health ministry, WHO and UNICEF found that about 43,000 excess deaths may have occurred in 2022, with half possibly children under five. Five failed rainy seasons left five million people facing acute food insecurity and nearly two million children at risk of malnutrition..⁴³

4.5 Sudan: famine driven by conflict, not drought alone

In November 2025 the IPC confirmed famine conditions in Al Fasher (North Darfur) and Kadugli (South Kordofan), with 21.2 million people, 45% of the population, facing high acute food insecurity and 20 more areas at risk of famine.⁴⁴ The case shows that irrigation and soil measures cannot prevent famine where fighting blocks food and aid.

³⁹ United Nations in Zambia. Zambia: Drought Response Appeal, May 2024 to December 2024. <https://zambia.un.org/en/268038-zambia-drought-response-appeal-may-2024-december-2024-may-2024>

⁴⁰ Euronews. Zambia declares national emergency as drought devastates food and electricity supply (1 March 2024). <https://www.euronews.com/green/2024/03/01/zambia-declares-national-emergency-as-drought-devastates-food-and-electricity-supply>

⁴¹ UNDP Zambia. Tackling water scarcity with innovative irrigation solutions (SCRALA project... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴² World Agroforestry (ICRAF). Niger's re-greening revolution... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴³ UNICEF. New study finds that 43,000 "excess deaths" may have occurred in 2022 from the drought in Somalia. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/new-study-finds-43000-excess-deaths-may-have-occurred-2022-drought-somalia>

⁴⁴ UNICEF. Famine conditions confirmed in Sudan's Al Fasher and Kadugli but hunger and... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

5. Major Actors

5.1 Countries and regions

Your delegation may represent any country, and your country may not be listed here. The table shows broad patterns only. **Always check your country's recent statements, laws and policies before you rely on them.**

Type of country	What to expect
Drought-hit countries (e.g. Zambia, Somalia)	Seek finance, technology and training, and stress early action and irrigation. ^{45,46}
Countries with very little irrigation	About 35 sub-Saharan African countries irrigate under 1% of farmland and ask for investment. ⁴⁷
Highly irrigated but water-scarce countries	Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan irrigate over 90% of cultivated land but face scarcity, so they stress saving water. ⁴⁸
Donor states and climate funds	Provide much of the finance, as with the Green Climate Fund, and ask for clear plans and results. ⁴⁹
Conflict-affected states	Famine can come from conflict as well as drought, and access is the main concern. ^{50,51}

Almost every state says it wants to prevent famine. The disagreements tend to come over **money** (who pays), **speed** (how fast) and **responsibility** (who must do more, and how to ensure that it happens).

5.2 Organisations and networks

- **FAO, WFP and UNDP.** FAO shares knowledge, WFP delivers emergency food and UNDP leads SCRALA with Zambia's government.^{52,53,54}
- **Green Climate Fund.** Finances climate adaptation projects.⁵⁵
- **UNCCD and IPC.** The UNCCD works on land and drought, and the IPC measures hunger and confirms famine.^{56,57}

⁴⁵ United Nations in Zambia. Zambia: Drought Response Appeal, May 2024 to December 2024... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴⁶ UNICEF. New study finds that 43,000 "excess deaths" may have occurred in 2022 from the drought... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴⁷ UN News. UN sounds alarm over rising demands on water resources as scarcity deepens (FAO land... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴⁸ UN News. UN sounds alarm over rising demands on water resources as scarcity deepens (FAO land... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

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⁵⁰ UN News. Two-thirds of global hunger concentrated in 10 conflict-hit countries (2026 Global... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁵¹ UNICEF. Famine conditions confirmed in Sudan's Al Fasher and Kadugli but hunger and... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

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⁵⁴ UNDP Zambia. Tackling water scarcity with innovative irrigation solutions (SCRALA project... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

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⁵⁷ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). Famine facts... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

6. Preparing for Committee

6.1 Questions a strong resolution answers

1. **What problem does it solve?** Drought, degraded soil, water shortage, or access? In which place and for whom?
2. **Who acts?** Name who will run it: farmers, communities, governments, funds or agencies.
3. **How is it funded?** Give a source, an amount if possible and a timeline.
4. **Is it climate-resilient?** Will it work if rainfall becomes less reliable?
5. **Does it protect water and soil?** Guard against over-extraction, salt build-up and erosion.
6. **Does it reach smallholders?** Including women and young farmers.
7. **How will it be checked?** Add reporting, indicators and a review date.
8. **Can it win support?** Will states from different regions and views vote for it?

6.2 Guiding questions for your research

1. How much of your country's food depends on rain-fed farming?
2. Has your country faced drought or famine, and how did it respond?
3. How much farmland is irrigated, and how sustainable is the water source?
4. What is the state of your country's soils, such as erosion, salt or nutrient loss?
5. Does your country give or receive money for agriculture and climate projects?
6. What can your country offer: finance, technology, training or research?
7. Which countries share your goals, and where would you compromise?

6.3 Where to research

- **FAO** website, including its reports on food security, land and water, and soils.
- **IPC** ([ipcinfo.org](https://www.ipcinfo.org)) for hunger classifications and famine analyses.
- **UN News and UNDP**, for recent project and country reports.
- **Your country's Ministry of Agriculture and water authority.**
- Your country's statements at the FAO and the UN.

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