

Finalist Submissions for the 2025 Geneva Trade Platform, WTO Secretariat, and CropLife International Hackathon

The task they were given:

In an era of **geopolitical risk, market volatility, and climate disruption**, how can the **multilateral trading system** be harnessed to strengthen **global food security**?

Participants are encouraged to tackle one or more of the following themes:

- 🌱 Boosting food trade resilience amid climate and supply chain shocks
- 🧑🏫 Enhancing market access for small-scale and vulnerable food producers
- 🗑️ Reducing trade-related food loss and waste
- 📊 Increasing transparency and predictability in agri-food trade
- 💻 Leveraging digital tools and data to improve food system outcomes

Evaluation Criteria used for the shortlisting and selection of finalists:

The pre-selection jury evaluated these proposals on:

1. **Originality & creativity** of the proposed application
2. The extent to which it **resolves a genuine problem**;
3. **Feasibility**, including awareness of limitations of existing technologies, frameworks and techniques;
4. **Style, structure, and clarity** of written submissions and video presentations

During the final:

Each team's video will be displayed, and they will be asked to present to the jury for a total of 6 minutes.

The jury may then put follow up questions to each team, and may consider the quality and thoughtfulness of the answers in reaching a final determination about the first, second and third place finishers.

Team Name: Spice Pacific

Redirecting Trade-Related Food Loss for Sustainable Biofuels

Question #1: a narrative section explaining the element of the problem the submission is hoping to address, and how the solution is intended to address it (1,000 words max.):

This policy brief tackles a crucial contradiction: even as vast quantities of food are lost in trade and supply chains, millions of hectares of farmland are still devoted to growing crops for fuel. This misalignment of incentives and trade structures undermines the efficacy of global food systems. Rerouting trade-related food loss toward biofuels production could free up food crops currently cultivated for biofuels, making them available for human consumption. Designed to reinforce the multilateral trading system, and implementable under the WTO, our proposal would strengthen global food security while generating broader spillover benefits.

Trade-related food loss remains a critical challenge for global food systems, reflecting inefficiencies and disruptions that occur across production and supply chains before food reaches retail shelves. In 2021, an estimated 13% of all harvested food, approximately 1.25 billion tons, was lost before reaching retail, even as nearly one third of the global population faced moderate or severe food insecurity. The implications are far-reaching: food loss generates around 10% of annual greenhouse gas emissions, costs more than \$1 trillion, and places mounting pressure on the environment.

While Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 12.3 calls for halving per capita food losses along supply chains by 2030, the SDGs Progress Chart of 2023 showed that progress has stalled, and in some cases reversed. Since 2016, global food loss has remained stagnant at an average of around 13%, with Western Africa (23%), the Caribbean (22%), and Southern Africa (20%) being among the worst-performing regions.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), underlying causes of trade-related food loss are diverse and particularly pronounced in perishable commodities. High rejection rates often occur during harvest and sorting due to stringent retailer standards. Farmers also overproduce as a safety net or harvest prematurely due to financial constraints, diverting surplus crops to less profitable uses. Despite the scale of these losses, in 2022 only 21 countries had incorporated food loss reduction targets into their national climate plans.

Instead of being diverted to composting or incineration, a significant portion of lost food stock holds potential for biofuels production. Redirecting food loss into the biofuel energy sector will offer multiple benefits. First, it will free agricultural output otherwise destined for energy production, allowing it to be redirected toward human consumption. For instance, in 2024, about 37% of U.S. corn was used for bioethanol. Similar shares of crops elsewhere, such as palm oil in Indonesia, sugarcane in Brazil, and wheat in Europe, were also directed to biofuels. Second, this approach will contribute to the decarbonization of the

transport sector, supporting efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change, while also strengthening energy security in the face of global market shocks. Finally, it will enhance food trade resilience by increasing staple supplies and creating markets that compensate small farmers for otherwise lost produce.

Current IEA projections indicate that the share of biofuels in transport fuel is expected to rise from 5.6% in 2023 to 6.4% by 2030, reaching an estimated 215 billion liters annually. This expansion, representing an increase of nearly 30% relative to the previous five-year period, would be concentrated in the United States, Europe, Brazil, Indonesia, and India, which collectively account for 85% of demand. Additionally, these regions are often reinforcing regulations, emissions targets, and financial mechanisms that support biofuel adoption.

Existing biofuel frameworks such as the IEA Bioenergy Task 40, the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP), the World Biogas Association (WBA), and the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) do not explicitly address trade-related food loss or consider surplus produce as viable input. Food governance initiatives, including the Codex Alimentarius Commission, focus on food safety but do not provide guidance on redirecting trade-related food loss. Agencies such as FAO and UNEP address food loss more broadly, but do not explicitly promote its rerouting for biofuels.

In this context, and given the global scale of the challenge and the diversity of actors involved, the multilateral trading system can be leveraged to address food loss by promoting its conversion into biofuels. Building on existing frameworks, we propose three primary policy instruments, supported by two complementary measures:

1. Enhance market access for producers. WTO agriculture and energy-related negotiations should recognize food loss-derived biofuels as an “environmental good,” qualifying it for preferential trade treatment. This creates incentives for producers to convert food loss into sustainable energy, generating both environmental and economic benefits. While previous initiatives, such as the Environmental Goods Agreement (EGA), stalled due to their broader scope, a more targeted approach focused on food loss reduction could garner stronger support from member states.
2. Reorient agricultural subsidies to support loss-to-energy initiatives. Current subsidies often incentivize overproduction, thereby contributing to food loss. These should be redirected toward projects with clear targets and objectives that encourage producers to channel food losses into the biofuel industry. Such measures could therefore be classified under the WTO “green box,” as defined in Annex 2 of the Agreement on Agriculture, which allows for non-trade-distorting subsidies, including payments under environmental programs.
3. Integrate food loss biofuels into carbon markets. Food loss biofuels should be linked to international carbon trading mechanisms, as established under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. This would enable countries and corporations that

convert food loss into biofuels to earn tradable carbon credits, providing both a financial incentive and a means to promote global emission reduction efforts.

In parallel, the effectiveness of these primary instruments can be reinforced through complementary measures. These include urging countries to reduce tariffs on equipment and services essential for food-to-biofuels conversion in order to facilitate technology transfer and adoption. Likewise, the continued promotion and adoption of global frameworks, such as the Voluntary Code of Conduct for Food Loss and Waste Reduction, would help to further address the challenge and better align international action.

Therefore, by integrating food loss into sustainable biofuel production, the multilateral trading system can simultaneously reduce food loss, support climate-change mitigation, enhance energy resilience, and strengthen food security, offering a multi-dimensional strategy aligned with the SDGs.

(991/1,000 words)

Question #2: a substantive section, outlining how the proposed solution would appear in a Ministerial Declaration, General Council Decision, treaty change, etc. (500 words max.):

Ministerial Declaration on Redirecting Trade-Related Food Loss for Sustainable Biofuels

SUBMISSION BY: All WTO Members (co-sponsored by FAO and UNEP)

We, the Ministers and Representatives of the Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), under the auspices of the WTO, with technical support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP),

1. RECALL the United Nations Food Systems Summit, the Paris Agreement, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Target 12.3 to halve per capita food loss and waste by 2030;
2. RECOGNIZE that trade-related food loss undermines food security, contributes to approximately 10% of annual greenhouse gas emissions, incurs economic losses exceeding USD 1 trillion, and imposes mounting pressure on land, water, and biodiversity;
3. NOTE that in 2021, an estimated 1.25 billion tonnes of harvested food, accounting for 13% of total production, was lost before reaching retail, even as nearly one-third of the world's population faced moderate or severe food insecurity;
4. AFFIRM the urgent need for international cooperation to reduce food loss, facilitate sustainable biofuels production, and build resilience at the nexus of food, energy, and climate systems;
5. In light of the above, the Ministerial Conference:
 - a. Recognizes biofuels derived from trade-related food loss as an "environmental good" under WTO disciplines, making them eligible for preferential trade treatment. This incentivises producers to promote the conversion of food loss into biofuels, yielding tangible environmental, economic, and social benefits;
 - b. Agrees to restructure agricultural subsidy programs to support food loss-to-biofuels initiatives under the WTO's "green box" provisions for non-trade-distorting environmental measures. Clear and measurable targets are to be tracked and shared under the aegis of the WTO Committee on Agriculture, with FAO providing permissible technical support;
 - c. Promotes the further development and exploration for linking food loss biofuels to Article 6 mechanisms of the Paris Agreement, to

enable eligible biofuels producers to generate tradable carbon credits. Cooperation shall be conducted among Members to develop robust verification, transparency, and reporting frameworks with FAO and UNEP in support of environmental integrity;

- d. Encourages Members to reduce or eliminate tariffs on essential equipment and services for food-to-biofuels conversion, including transesterification and fermentation technologies, to accelerate adoption, particularly in developing economies; and
 - e. Stresses the importance of adherence to voluntary instruments such as the Code of Conduct on Food Loss and Waste Reduction, to align policy, technical, and trade-oriented efforts.
6. The WTO Secretariat, in collaboration with FAO and UNEP, shall facilitate technical cooperation, best-practice sharing, and capacity-building initiatives to support implementation of the above work points. Annual progress report shall be submitted by Members to the WTO General Council, including on the share of food loss biofuels in national energy portfolios, carbon credits issued/earned, and reductions in trade-related food loss.
7. By adopting this Declaration, Members reaffirm their commitment to the SDGs, particularly Target 12.3, and affirm their determination to take collective action to reduce food loss, promote sustainable biofuels, enhance climate mitigation, and reinforce global food and energy resilience through practical, trade-aligned strategies.

(503/500 words)

Question 3: Video explanation (3 minutes, max)

<https://youtu.be/1E5iAasfkzc>



Team Name: Global Grains

Harvest-to-Market Facilitation Pathway (H2M)

Question #1: a narrative section explaining the element of the problem the submission is hoping to address, and how the solution is intended to address it (1,000 words max.):

PROBLEM

Post-harvest food loss refers to the measurable reduction in the quantity of food between harvest and consumption, typically caused by spoilage, pests, or rot. Globally, the FAO estimates that about 30% of food produced is lost before reaching consumers; in Africa, this figure rises to as much as 40%, with losses exceeding USD 4 billion annually, enough to feed millions of people each year.

The consequences of food loss are profound. At the local level, post-harvest loss reduces food availability and undercuts the incomes of smallholder farmers, who make up the backbone of African agriculture but often lack access to modern storage or cold-chain infrastructure. This undermines their ability to invest in improved seeds, crop protection, and sustainable practices. At the systemic level, unreliable supply limits opportunities for African countries to participate in global value chains, weakens regional trade, and increases reliance on food imports. This dependency leaves countries particularly vulnerable to global price volatility, climate shocks, and geopolitical tensions.

The causes of post-harvest loss are both structural and environmental. Longer droughts, unpredictable rainfall, floods, and pest outbreaks, caused by climate change, accelerate spoilage and disproportionately affects Africa as one of the most climate-vulnerable regions in the world. Yet, much of the loss also stems from addressable constraints such as inadequate storage facilities, inefficient rural transport networks, long border wait times, and the absence of functioning cold chains. While technologies such as improved silos, sealed grain bags, and solar-powered cold storage have been developed to reduce food loss, they remain underutilized in rural Africa due to relatively high implementation costs (if those costs are to be borne by the farmers), and a lack of incentives. Closing this gap is essential for food security and trade resilience.

SOLUTION

To strengthen international trade flows and to ensure global food security, we propose the establishment of improved storage facilities in areas most affected by the negative impacts of post-harvest food loss. This approach is characterised by tackling the problem on the physical infrastructure level and the systemic level. Thus, it shall help in guaranteeing that agricultural produce is not just stored more efficiently, but that distribution and trade thereof is creating economic opportunity for producers on the margins.

On the physical infrastructure level, investments in improved vertical storage facilities are incentivized in strategically important areas that lack said infrastructure. Technical knowledge thereto is readily available, and reliance on

geopolitical stability is minimized. Furthermore, vertical storage systems like silos are creating climate and supply-side risk resilient modes of food storage that can be built at relatively low implementation cost (for institutional actors), smoothen supply, and increase predictability and stability of markets. This has the potential to positively impact prices and the competitiveness of regions with geographical and infrastructural disadvantages. Thereafter, local, regional and international trade can benefit from the increased efficiency, and the improved storage facilities create conditions conducive to reliable, sustainable and equitable trade and growth.

On the systemic level, the creation of a network of facilities is envisioned to enable efficient trade flows from peripheries to trade centres. Through the implementation of TFA-enhanced Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) certified warehouses along the trade routes, information about stocks transit seamlessly, thereby reducing transaction- and opportunity cost. Empowered by vertical storage facilities, small-scale farmers can contribute their produce to larger trade endeavours, benefitting from economies of scale and increased returns on investment.

IMPLEMENTATION

A more detailed examination of these two levels of implementation illustrates the practical measures through which the proposal can achieve its intended impact.

Physical Infrastructure Level: Vertical Storage Warehouses for Export-Ready Consignments

With government backing through the Aid for Trade Initiative, farmer cooperatives can upgrade or establish certified storage hubs with vertical silos comprising basic quality testing equipment. While cooperatives have had limited success in bolstering economically viable trade in many parts of Africa, their role in aggregating farmers' crops provides an essential foundation for warehouse receipt systems and other mechanisms that enhance both storage capacity and market access. Local farmers deposit their harvests (e.g., maize, beans) in these facilities, where the transactions are authenticated through encrypted warehouse certificates. These certificates remain in a secure database and can be used as collateral for loans under the International Finance Corporation (IFC)'s Global Warehouse Finance Program (GWFP). In this way, farmers reduce post-harvest losses and gain access to the trade market by consolidating their produce into export-ready consignments.

Systemic Level: A TFA-Enhanced 'Green-Lane' for Grains and Perishables

In the long term, these certified warehouses can evolve into Authorized Economic Operators (AEO), under the World Customs Organization (WCO) SAFE Framework. This status—which necessitates some internal controls, financial solvency, and supply chain security—would grant them access to trade facilitation measures under the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), such as low documentary, low rate of physical inspection, or deferred payment of duties (Art. 7.7). By securely sharing data along strategic trade routes, certified warehouses become trusted nodes in the TFA Framework, enabling joint inspection before

shipment (Art. 8) and priority clearance for food in transit (Art. 11). Together, these measures create "fast-track" lanes for grains and perishable goods, linking improved storage at the farmer level with more efficient cross-border trade.

CHALLENGES

Vertical storage infrastructures require an important investment upfront, let alone maintenance costs. To address this financing gap, the IFC's Global Food Safety and Food Loss Prevention Advisory Program constitutes a good starting point. The Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), a multilateral financing platform dedicated to improving food and nutrition security worldwide, is one of its sponsors. The focus should be on public-private partnerships, blending concessional finance from development banks with private sector participation.

Given the risk of larger, export-oriented farmers capturing most of the benefits, leaving small-scale farmers behind, equity can be safeguarded by introducing subsidized access for smallholders, quotas ensuring a share of storage space for vulnerable farmers, and community oversight mechanisms to avoid elite capture. In addition, digital monitoring systems (blockchain-based inventories, for instance) could reduce corruption risks while ensuring a more transparent management of the structures.

(999/1,000 words)

Question #2: Question #2: a substantive section, outlining how the proposed solution would appear in a Ministerial Declaration, General Council Decision, treaty change, etc. (500 words max.):

Building on the last meeting of the Committee on Trade Facilitation (TFC)—which has the mandate to monitor and guide implementation of the TFA—and its dedicated session on transit, held on 4-5 June 2025, this proposal calls for the joint participation of concerned Members States and relevant observers organizations, such as the WCO, the World Bank's IFC, and UNCTAD, to hold a dedicated session on storage and fast-track transit to prevent post-harvest food loss at the next TFC meeting (1-3 December 2025). This session would allow Member states most affected by post-harvest food loss to bring the issue to the agenda and highlight the inefficiencies of current trade routes, along with the key steps necessary to implement the solution. Ad hoc discussion between concerned states and donors on the framing and implementation of such a solution under the TFA can be facilitated by the Committee itself, in accordance with Art. 23(1.8).

Ultimately, this initiative would be taken forward by a Committee Decision establishing the Harvest-to-Market Facilitation Pathway (H2M)—the proposal made above. Such an instrument would not amend or add binding obligations to the Agreement, but would rather mobilize and interpret existing provisions in the TFA, notably Art. 7.7 on trade facilitation measures for authorized operators, Art. 7.9 on perishable goods, Art. 8 on border agency cooperation, Art. 10 on formalities connected with importation, exportation, and transit, and Art. 11 on freedom of transit. By grounding the initiative in these provisions, Members would focus on strengthening implementation rather than reopening negotiations.

The Decision would establish an annual dedicated session on “Storage and Fast-Track Food Corridors”, open to Member States and observer organizations. This session would serve three functions: first, it would facilitate Members’ experience-sharing on cooperatives formation, financing mechanisms, or best practices or challenges related to AEO status; second, it would allow observers and technical agencies to present tools and financing opportunities related to the initiative; and third, it would provide a platform to track progress and identify remaining obstacles to implementation.

The outcome of each session would be compiled by the Secretariat into a Best Practices on Storage and Fast-Track Food Corridors Document, updated annually, that highlights concrete measures for Members willing to apply the Harvest-to-Market Facilitation Pathway. By providing detailed references as to how TFA provisions can be leveraged to reduce post-harvest food losses and facilitate export access to smallholders, this document would act as authoritative reference for other Members to rely on.

By framing the initiative within the long term work of the Committee on Trade Facilitation, Member States would ensure that the issue of post-harvest food loss remains embedded in the TFA framework. Additional instruments such as the Committee Decision, the Best Practice Document, and recurring dedicated sessions would provide a coherent and sustainable pathway for translating

existing TFA commitments into tangible improvements in food security and trade facilitation outcomes.

(475/500 words)

Question 3: Video explanation (3 minutes, max)

<https://youtu.be/eAPr7k2AAEA>

The slide is titled "Implementation" in a large, bold, yellow font. It is divided into two main sections, each with a numbered yellow circle icon. The first section, labeled "1 Physical infrastructure level", has a light yellow background and contains the title "Vertical Storage Warehouses for Export-Ready Consignments" in bold. It lists three bullet points: government support via Aid for Trade Initiative, farmers depositing harvests and receiving encrypted certificates, and certificates being stored in a secure database to serve as collateral for IFC's Global Warehouse Finance Program. The second section, labeled "2 Systemic level", has a light green background and contains the title "A TFA-Enhanced 'Green-Lane' for Grains and Perishables" in bold. It lists three bullet points: certified warehouses evolving into Authorized Economic Operators (AEOs), granting access to WTO TFA measures (Art. 7.7) with sub-points for reduced documentation, lower inspections, and deferred duties, and secure data sharing along trade routes making warehouses trusted TFA nodes.

Implementation

1 Physical infrastructure level

Vertical Storage Warehouses for Export-Ready Consignments

- Government support via **Aid for Trade Initiative** enables farmer cooperatives to build/upgrade certified storage hubs with vertical silos comprising basic quality testing equipment.
- Farmers deposit harvests and receive encrypted warehouse certificates.
- Certificates are stored in a secure database and can serve as collateral for IFC's **Global Warehouse Finance Program (GWFP)**.

2 Systemic level

A TFA-Enhanced 'Green-Lane' for Grains and Perishables

- Certified warehouses evolve into **Authorized Economic Operators (AEOs)** under the **WCO SAFE Framework**.
- Grants access to **WTO TFA measures (Art. 7.7)**:
 - Reduced documentation requirements;
 - Lower rate of physical inspections;
 - Deferred payment of duties...
- Secure data sharing along trade routes makes warehouses **trusted TFA nodes**, enables joint inspections before shipment (Art. 8) and priority clearance for food in transit (Art. 11).

Team Name: AgroStrategos

Reforming Agricultural Export Restrictions: A Step to Build a Resilient Trade System for Global Food Security

Question #1: a narrative section explaining the element of the problem the submission is hoping to address, and how the solution is intended to address it (1,000 words max.):

Global food security faces a profound paradox characterized by aggregate sufficiency alongside persistent distributional imbalances. According to data from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), global per capita grain availability reached a historic high of 410 kg in 2024, demonstrating that global grain supply is sufficient in aggregate terms. Nevertheless, approximately 720 million people worldwide continue to face the threat of hunger. The core challenge to food security primarily resides in systemic issues, including regional disparities in distribution and disruptions in supply chains. The widespread imposition of agricultural export restrictions has emerged as a significant man-made obstacle that distorts global grain distribution. Historical evidence indicates that such measures tend to cluster during periods of food crisis, thereby reinforcing a self-perpetuating cycle of instability.

Amid escalating global food crises, export restrictions have proliferated dramatically across both time and geography, intensifying systemic fragility in agricultural trade. During the 2008 global food crisis, 31 countries implemented a total of 1144 restrictive measures. This number rose sharply to 635 during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to 1730 during the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Combined, these three periods account for 73% of all global measures implemented over the past two decades. Geographically, over 90% of restrictive measures are highly concentrated in Asia, Africa, and Europe, with harsh export bans being the predominant form. The commodities targeted are central to food security—primarily grains and oils. During the Russia-Ukraine conflict, export restrictions impacted 44% of global grain trade (US\$60.82 billion) and 44.5% of global oil trade (US\$61.21 billion), causing widespread disruption to international supply chains.

This “beggar-thy-neighbor” policy triggers catastrophic ripple effects across global food systems. Firstly, it directly drives up global grain prices. The empirical studies shows that export restrictions increased rice prices by 45% and wheat prices by 30% during the food crisis, with an further 18% increase during COVID-19 pandemic. Secondly, export restriction measures inflict severe welfare losses on net grain-importing countries. Price surges pushed 44 million people into poverty between 2007 and 2009, with particularly severe impacts on highly import-dependent regions such as Africa. Lastly, export restriction measures also harm the implementing countries themselves. For example, Tanzania’s maize export ban caused producer prices to plummet by 7%~26% , while policy uncertainty led to a 26% decline in wheat planting intentions in Argentina.

The widespread adoption of export restrictions by nearly 90% of net grain-exporting countries reflects unprecedented strain on the global grain distribution

system. Concurrently, FAO projections indicate that climate change could render up to 10% of current agricultural land unsuitable for cultivation by mid-century, compounding pressures on worldwide food security. Addressing the paradox of “adequate aggregate production coexisting with acute localised famine” calls for urgent multilateral action to prevent the excessive use of trade barriers. This highlights a central challenge in establishing a more resilient international grain market: overcoming institutional constraints that hinder progress toward a more secure and equitable global food system.

As a cornerstone of global food trade governance, the WTO’s existing rules and ongoing reform efforts are critical to preventing the misuse of export restrictions. However, agricultural negotiations within the WTO have historically prioritized market access issues—particularly the liberalization of import markets. By contrast, regulatory frameworks on the supply side, especially those governing export restrictions, remain underdeveloped and lack clear, enforceable disciplines. This asymmetry has resulted in inadequate oversight of export markets, thereby undermining the stability of global food supply chains.

The WTO has established a preliminary regulatory framework to guide the implementation of export controls in a reasonable manner and to help promote stability in global agricultural markets. However, an examination of the legal provisions governing agricultural export restrictions under the GATT and the WTO reveals significant limitations in several key areas: preconditions, buffer periods, transparency, and exemption criteria:

(i) Ambiguity in Preconditions: Article XI of the GATT permits members to adopt “temporary” export restrictions in cases involving “essential products” or “critical shortages.” However, the terms “essential products” and “critical shortages” are not clearly defined, leaving their interpretation open to discretion. This lack of clarity has, in some instances, enabled members to impose export constraints even in the absence of significant domestic supply shortfalls.

(ii) Unclear Buffer Period Requirements: Article 12.1(b) of the Agreement on Agriculture stipulates that members introducing new export restrictions must notify the Committee on Agriculture in advance and provide relevant information. Nevertheless, the rule does not specify the required advance notice period nor the minimum content of such notifications, resulting in inconsistent implementation.

(iii) Weak Transparency Mechanisms: Although Article 12.1(b) of the AoA also encourages members—where practicable—to submit written notifications prior to imposing export restrictions, compliance remains low. Many notifications are submitted late, and a substantial number of measures go unreported, undermining oversight and predictability.

(iv) Poorly Defined Exemptions: Article 12.2 of the AoA exempts developing countries that are “net-food exporter of the specific foodstuff concerned” from the obligations under Article 12.1. Yet the Agreement offers no clear methodology for determining “net-food exporter” status, nor does it provide a definitive list of eligible countries, leading to ambiguity in application.

To strengthen the governance of export restrictions, WTO member have consistently pursued negotiations on agricultural trade measures during successive Ministerial Conferences. MC11 featured a dedicated session focused on export restrictions, highlighting their growing prominence within multilateral discourse. At MC12, members adopted a decision to exempt humanitarian purchases made by the World Food Programme from export prohibitions or restrictions. While MC13 did not yield consensus on broader exemptions for food-insecure countries, it facilitated substantive dialogue that helps prepare the ground for future legal refinements. Going forward, continued evolution of the WTO framework on export restrictions will be critical to enhancing the resilience of global food trade, particularly in response to climate-related disruptions and supply chain volatility.

(951/1,000 words)

Question #2: Question #2: a substantive section, outlining how the proposed solution would appear in a Ministerial Declaration, General Council Decision, treaty change, etc. (500 words max.):

Understanding that global climate change and supply chain shocks are exacerbating worldwide food insecurity, and that unimpeded trade plays a vital role in improving global food security and enhancing nutrition. The provisions on agricultural export restriction measures under the WTO framework are not only key to maintaining the stability of the international food market order but also essential for safeguarding the basic subsistence rights of the global hungry population and elevating the level of world food security.

Recalling Article XI.2(a) of the GATT 1994 and Article 12 of the Agreement on Agriculture. Acknowledging the 2022 Ministerial Declaration on World Food Programme Food Purchases Exemption from Export Prohibitions or Restrictions.

Agreeing to continue advancing the optimization and improvement of the provisions on export restriction measures in the Agreement on Agriculture, thereby constructing a comprehensive strategic framework that is both institutionally binding and accommodates the interests and concerns of all members.

We have reached the following shared understandings:

- Clarifying the core concepts and operational parameters of export restriction measures is essential for their justified application. A per capita food availability level falling below the FAO's safety threshold of 400 kg may serve as an objective criterion for determining whether an implementing country or region is experiencing a critical shortage of food supplies.
- Specifying temporal constraints for export restriction measures is critical to ensuring predictability and minimizing trade disruptions. This includes establishing a mandatory advance written notification period to the Committee on Agriculture prior to implementation, as well as clearly defining the maximum duration for which such measures may be temporarily applied by the implementing country or region.
- Developing and maintaining a regularly updated list of members eligible for exemptions from export restriction measures is essential, with particular consideration given to the food security import needs of vulnerable countries—especially Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Net Food-Importing Developing Countries (NFIDCs).
- Establishing an efficient international consultation mechanism for export restriction measures should include: i) a dedicated platform clarifying members' rights and obligations to ensure equal and fair dialogue; ii) detailed procedural guidelines for initiating, preparing, and conducting effective consultations; iii) transparent and timely notification of consultation outcomes to all relevant members.

- Strengthening technical support and assistance for developing countries is critical, and should include:
 - i. establishing a global technical assistance network focused on export restriction measures, prioritizing specialized training, technology transfer, and regular workshops to enhance developing countries' capabilities in information access and notification compliance;
 - ii. encouraging voluntary experience-sharing among members, particularly those that have implemented export restrictions, to facilitate the exchange of practical insights on policy design, implementation, and impact evaluation.

(433/500 words)

Question 3: Video explanation (3 minutes, max)

<https://youtu.be/u8VP38tbUzI>



The screenshot shows a video player interface. The main content is a slide titled "Problem" in a large, bold, dark font. Below the title, there are three bullet points, each starting with a small black square. The first bullet point discusses the "Global food security paradox", the second discusses the "Problematic application of export restrictions", and the third discusses the "Weak and unclear WTO framework". In the bottom right corner of the video player, there is a small inset window showing a woman with long dark hair and glasses, wearing a light-colored top, who appears to be the presenter. The slide also features a decorative graphic of two green leaves in the bottom left corner.

Problem

- **Global food security paradox** : Grain production is sufficient, yet 720 million people face hunger due to distributional imbalances and supply chain disruptions.
- **Problematic application of export restrictions** : the misuse of export restrictions distorts international food circulation. These restrictions are geographically concentrated and primarily target grains and oils. Climate-related supply shocks amplify the impact of trade restrictions.
- **Weak and unclear WTO framework** :
Vague preconditions for restrictions.
No clear buffer periods or notification timelines.
Poor transparency and inconsistent reporting.
Unclear exemption criteria and no binding enforcement.