



# Right to food in the cities: focus on Mexico legislation

## Law on Food Security and Nutrition in Mexico Federal District

The Law on Food Security and Nutrition, approved on the 17th of August by the Legislative Assembly of the Federal District, is a milestone for the protection of the right to food. It is one of the first laws in the world implementing the right to food at the sub-national level and thus bringing the right to food protection closer to the citizens. An important achievement of the Law is that the right to food is recognized both, as a fundamental human right and as the main objective of such a Law.

This means a crucial step for decentralize concrete actions for a progressive realization of the right to food of all persons living in the Mexican capital. According to the numbers of INEGI (National Institute of Statistics and Geography), almost half a million people in Mexico City are still food insecure.

The Law explicitly guarantees the right to food as a universal human right and includes the human rights principles as well as the implementation steps needed for its full realization. Beside other components,

the new Law establishes the **Food Security and Nutrition System of the Federal District** and reaffirms the role of the Social Development Council, which foresees the participation of civil society in the planning, design, decision making, programming, execution and evaluation of policies and actions. Furthermore, the Law creates a comprehensive **Food Security Programme** as planning instrument to define responsibilities, priorities and budget allocations. The Law also establishes monitoring proceedings such as the **Commission of Surveillance and Assessment of Social Policies and Programmes** and mechanisms to promote the exigibility of the right to food.

In addition to the institutional dimension and the human rights principles included in the Law, it is worth mentioning that the Law establishes a system through which people's access to policies, programs and actions undertaken by the Federal Government is facilitated. This is an essential element for the citizens to participate in decision making process and to hold the competent authorities responsible for their actions and omissions.



The elaboration process of the new Law and its final approval successfully demonstrate a combined effort made by the Mexicans and FAO, who promoted and accompanied stakeholders since 2008 through the Hunger-Free Latin America and Caribbean Initiative.

The example of Mexico D.C. shows how structural changes at the local level, especially in the cities, are essential for making the right to food happen for its citizens. Decentralized institutions have

a crucial role to play. Indeed, national laws, policies, strategies and programs will remain only on paper unless they are translated into local realities. This is the level where the State delivers its obligation to respect, protect, and fulfill the right to adequate food. It is the level where the voices of the poor are heard and where the implementation of the principles of empowerment, participation, accountability, transparency and the rule of law will have direct and tangible effects.

# The human right to adequate food



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## **Right to Food**

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**FAO Food for cities multi-disciplinary initiative**  
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The text of the **Food Security and Nutrition Law** is available at:  
<http://www.rlc.fao.org/frente/pdf/leysandf.pdf>