



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Fifteen years implementing the Right to Food Guidelines

Reviewing progress to achieve
the 2030 Agenda

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Rome, 2019

Required citation:

FAO. 2019. *Fifteen years implementing the Right to Food Guidelines. Reviewing progress to achieve the 2030 Agenda*. Rome.

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ISBN 978-92-5-131821-8

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Foreword

“The Right to Food Guidelines anticipated the urgency to address today's most pressing global challenges.”

Fifteen years have passed since the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security (Right to Food Guidelines) by the 127th Session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Council in November 2004. *Fifteen years implementing the Right to Food Guidelines* is aimed at communicating and sharing the experiences over the past 15 years, on how the progressive realization of the right to adequate food has acted as a game-changer in many countries.

With the aim to provide practical guidance to States in their efforts to achieve the goals of the 1999 World Food Summit Plan of Action, the Right to Food Guidelines represented the first attempt by governments to interpret an economic, social and cultural right and recommend actions to be undertaken for its realization.

Since the turn of the century, significant progress has been made at different levels to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food through the actions of a wide range of stakeholders. Globally, the starting point was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which was subsequently developed into legally binding agreements such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1966. Since then, additional international legal guarantees have been

afforded to specific groups, such as women, children and persons living with disabilities. Nevertheless, issues of marginalization, historical exclusion, inequality and vulnerability are still hampering the enjoyment of this right across the board.

Unfortunately, the latest *State of the World Food Security in the World (SOFI) 2019* presents us with an increased number of people who suffer from hunger. Currently, more than 820 million people in the world are still hungry. SOFI 2019 discusses how economic slowdowns and downturns disproportionately undermine food security and nutrition where inequalities are greater. This report sends an important message: countries which have economic and social policies already in place that are truly people-centric and look at how to sustainably safeguard food security and nutrition for the most vulnerable, guaranteeing essential services and rights to all such as health care, education, social protection, etc., are, to put it simply, better equipped to face adverse economic cycles.

The Right to Food Guidelines have guided us over the years to do just that. Today, this document shows its contemporaneity. It reminds States of the importance to take immediate action and forever change the way we design, implement and monitor policies for food security and nutrition. Thanks to the Right to Food Guidelines, great awareness has been raised on how the human rights principles of

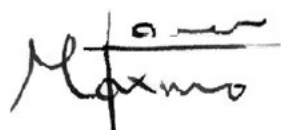
participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, human dignity, empowerment and equality, and the rule of law, can increase policy impact by focusing on the most vulnerable peoples; and how a people-centered approach can represent an investment with enormous economic returns, whilst bearing an increased chance for more sustainable paths to development. In addition, these Guidelines have triggered the need to expand and further elaborate policy guidance on the governance of land tenure, small-scale fisheries, responsible investment in agriculture, protracted crises and, most recently, on sustainable food systems and nutrition.

In many instances, the broader goal to ensure the right to food, has had a trickle-down effect setting in motion the drafting, design, adoption, implementation of cross-sectoral and multistakeholder measures and initiatives towards food security and nutrition. These have taken different shapes and forms, according to each context, such as constitutional protections, framework laws, sectoral laws, policy, programmes and strategies, and even specific monitoring framework to ensure the respect, protection and fulfilment of this human right.

As eloquently described in this timely review, the Right to Food Guidelines anticipated the urgency to address today's most pressing global challenges: conflicts, migrations, climate change-connected issues such as drought, water scarcity, natural disasters and hazards -these cannot be solved unless leaving no one behind ceases to be just a motto-. Most importantly, *leaving no one behind* requires the efforts of a multitude of actors, cooperating, dialoguing,

establishing partnerships and moving coherently together to achieve common goals. This review, presents us with a handful of examples of how, for instance, civil society organizations, parliamentarians, academia, consumer organizations, international financial institutions, development cooperation agencies, by working closely with government and its institutions, can be a powerful catalyst for the enjoyment of the right to food for all.

Finally, this publication reminds us all of the important role played by FAO as a convening agent and facilitator of policy dialogue, provider of technical support and high-quality knowledge generation hub, to advance the human right to adequate food over the last one and half decade. FAO today is a custodian of 21 indicators under five of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) part of the 2030 Agenda. These global goals are well-anchored in human rights bringing once again FAO and its constitutional responsibility to step up and keep providing its crucial support to its Member Countries to ensure that this powerful human right can be a true catalyst to a successful roadmap leading up to 2030 and beyond.



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Acknowledgements

The publication *Fifteen years implementing the Right to Food Guidelines – reviewing progress to achieve 2030 Agenda* has been prepared by the Right to Food Team of the Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division (ESP) of the FAO. Simon Blondeau and Serena Pepino, Right to Food Team, were responsible for the overall preparation and coordination of the publication, together with Juan Carlos García y Cebolla, Right to Food Team Leader, responsible in addition for the technical supervision.

The Right to Food Team wishes to acknowledge the following individuals, teams and groups in FAO who contributed with their comments and inputs at different stages which greatly enriched the publication: Ricardo Rapallo, Senior Food Security Officer, Carlos Laorden, Journalist for FIRST Programme, Margret Vidar, Legal Officer, May Hani, Policy Officer, Christiane Monsieur, Project Coordinator, Andrea Sánchez Enciso, Gender, Empowerment and Community Mobilization Specialist, José Valls, Policy Officer, Valeria Pasarín, Legal Consultant, Manuela Cuvi, Legal Officer, Luis Lobo, Technical Officer, Rodrigo de Lapuerta, Director, Yon Fernández Larrinoa, Indigenous Peoples Team Leader, Mariana Estrada, Indigenous

Peoples Communication Specialist, Pascal Liu, Senior Economist, Victor Prada, Public Private Partnerships Specialist (World Banana Forum), and Pedro Marcelo Arias, Economist.

The text was kindly reviewed by Claire Mason and Melissa Shapiro, and benefit from valuable comments by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Hilal Elver.

The final copyediting was carried out by Lynette Hunt, and translation into Spanish and French by Iñigo Alvarez-Miranda and Angeline Hadman respectively. The layout and graphic design is by Carlos de la Fuente. Finally, a special thanks goes to Marta Ramón Pascual, Right to Food Communication Specialist, who supported the review, editing, translation and dissemination of the publication throughout.

This publication was possible thanks to the financial support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) through the project GCP/GLO/545/SPA *Improved legal frameworks and accountability mechanisms to realize the right to food*.

Acronyms

ASSECCA	<i>Association of Senate, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World</i>	GC	<i>General Comment</i>
CEDAW	<i>Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women</i>	GSF	<i>Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition</i>
CESCR	<i>Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</i>	HRBA	<i>Human rights-based approach</i>
CFS	<i>Committee on World Food Security</i>	HRC	<i>Human Rights Council</i>
CONASAN	<i>National Food and Nutrition Security Council</i>	ICESCR	<i>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</i>
COP	<i>Conference of the Parties</i>	ICN2	<i>Second International Conference on Nutrition</i>
CRC	<i>Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>	IDPs	<i>Internally displaced peoples</i>
CRPD	<i>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i>	IFIs	<i>International Financial Institutions</i>
CSOs	<i>Civil society organizations</i>	INCOPAS	<i>Social Consultation and Participation Authority</i>
EAPA FSN	<i>Eastern African Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition</i>	NCDs	<i>Non-communicable diseases</i>
EBRD	<i>European Bank for Reconstruction and Development</i>	ODA-ALC	<i>Right to Food Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean</i>
EIB	<i>European Investment Bank</i>	ODA-E	<i>Spanish Observatory on the Right to Food</i>
FAO	<i>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</i>	PANTHER	<i>Participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, human dignity, empowerment and equality, and the rule of law</i>
FFA	<i>Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises</i>	PAP-FSN	<i>Pan African Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition</i>
FLW	<i>Food loss and waste</i>	PARLATINO	<i>Latin American and Caribbean Parliament</i>

PFH-LAC	<i>Parliamentary Front Against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean</i>
RAI	<i>Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems</i>
SDGs	<i>Sustainable Development Goals</i>
SINASAN	<i>National Food and Nutrition Security System of Guatemala</i>
SISAN	<i>National Food and Nutrition Security System of Brazil</i>
SOFI	<i>State of the World Food Security</i>
SSF Guidelines	<i>Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication</i>
UDHR	<i>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</i>
UN	<i>United Nations</i>
UNFCCC	<i>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</i>
VGGT	<i>Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security</i>
WFS	<i>World Food Summit</i>

BOXES

ABC	<i>Brazilian Cooperation Agency</i>
AECID	<i>Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation</i>
AMEXCID	<i>Mexican Agency for International Cooperation</i>
BOHESI	<i>Banana Occupational Health and Safety Initiative</i>
CODAN	<i>Subnational Council for Food and Nutrition</i>
COMAN	<i>Municipal Council for Food and Nutrition</i>
CONAN	<i>National Council for Food and Nutrition</i>
CPR	<i>Civil and political rights</i>
CT-CONAN	<i>Technical Committee of CONAN</i>
DANIDA	<i>Danish International Development Agency</i>
EIDHR	<i>European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights</i>
ESCR	<i>Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</i>
EU	<i>European Union</i>
FNSP	<i>Food and Nutrition Security Plan of Action of Nepal</i>
GIZ	<i>Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany</i>
ILO	<i>International Labour Organization</i>
MUFPP	<i>Milan Urban Food Policy Pact</i>
NHRAP	<i>National Human Rights Action Plan</i>
NHRC	<i>National Human Rights Commission</i>
SIDA	<i>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency</i>
UNDRIP	<i>United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</i>
WBF	<i>World Banana Forum</i>

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Introduction

While the last century has seen great socio-economic progress and significant welfare improvements worldwide, much remains to be done to fulfil FAO's vision of creating a world free from hunger and malnutrition, where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner. The 2030 Agenda with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) calls on the world to eliminate hunger and malnutrition through SDG 2 and its targets. The SDGs are grounded in human rights and recall the importance of the progressive realization of the human right to adequate food for all.

Ever since the United Nations (UN) Charter was drafted in 1941 and signed in 1945, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDSHR) adopted in

DID YOU KNOW?

Human Rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent, and inalienable. One cannot be realized without the other. A human rights-based approach (HRBA) promotes policy coherence.

1948, prominent attention has been given to ensure that every human being enjoys a set of internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Initially included in Article 25 of the UDHR as part of the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to adequate food has since been legally guaranteed in a number of international instruments. The International Covenant on Economic, Social

and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in particular guarantees the right to adequate food and the right to freedom against hunger in its Article 11. Following the adoption of additional instruments further guaranteeing the right to adequate food of specific groups, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the 1996 World Food Summit (WFS) presented a turning point towards a better understanding of what the right to adequate food means. As part of the WFS outcome documents, the ground had been laid for developing a clearer interpretation as well as providing practical guidance on ways to implement the human right to adequate food.

In 1999, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), in its General Comment (GC) 12, offered an authoritative interpretation of Article 11 of the ICESCR. Besides detailing what the general and specific obligations of the right to adequate food entail and providing clarity on many of its aspects, GC 12 provides an overall definition of the right to adequate food: “when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, have physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement”.¹ One year later, the Human Rights Council (HRC) established the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food in order to respond fully to the need for an integrated and coordinated approach to the promotion and protection of the right to food and supporting a greater understanding of what Article 11 of the ICESCR entails. Still, the need to find concrete and practical ways for the realization of the right to adequate food continued.

Hence, during the 2002 World Food Summit, five years later, Heads of State and Government invited the FAO Council “to establish [...] an Intergovernmental Working Group [...] to elaborate, in a period of two years, a set of voluntary guidelines to support Members’ efforts to achieve the progressive realization of the right to adequate

DID YOU KNOW?

The UN signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2003 endorsing a human rights-based approach (HRBA). UN specialized agencies including FAO, programmes and bodies responding to the call of the Secretary-General agreed upon a common understanding concerning the content of a HRBA to programming. For the UN system, the mainstreaming of human rights implies that:

1. All programmes of development cooperation, policies and technical assistance should **further the realization of human rights** as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.
2. **Human rights standards** contained in, and **principles** derived from, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments **guide all development cooperation and programming** in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process. Human rights principles include **participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, human dignity, empowerment and equality, and the rule of law (PANTHER)**.
3. Development cooperation contributes to the development of the capacities of **‘duty-bearers’** to meet their obligations and/or of **‘rights-holders’** to claim their rights.

food”.² Objective 7.4 of the WFS Plan of Action established the task “to clarify the content of the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, as stated in the ICESCR and other relevant international and regional instruments, and to give particular attention to implementation and full and progressive realization of this right as a means of achieving food security for all”.³ In November 2004, following two years of international work and negotiations, the FAO Council adopted by consensus the Voluntary Guidelines to support the Progressive Realization of the Right to

Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security (hereafter “Right to Food Guidelines”).

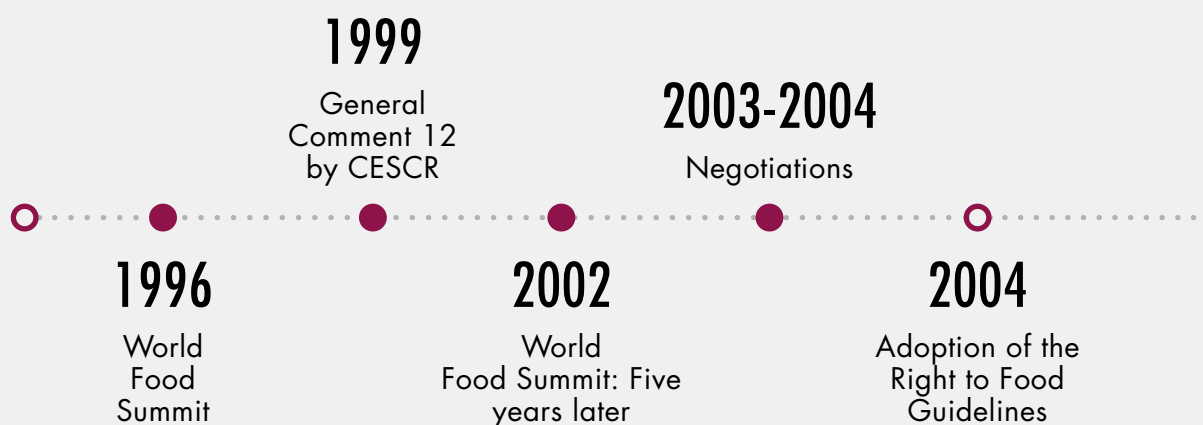
The Right to Food Guidelines provide practical guidance on ways to implement the right to adequate food in a wide range of policy and programme areas through a human rights-based approach (HRBA).

When the FAO Council adopted the Right to Food Guidelines at its 127th session, Members emphasized the importance of the Guidelines and the need to focus on their implementation.⁴ A dedicated team was created in FAO that has, over the years, developed tools and documents to assist stakeholders in implementing the Guidelines while raising awareness, strengthening capacities and providing expert support to duty-bearers and rights-holders in order to support them towards the progressive realization of the right to adequate food. FAO still plays an important role today, 15 years on from the adoption of the Right to Food Guidelines, and their subsequent endorsement during the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) reform in 2009, continuing to support Members in their implementation. There are numerous good practices, stories from the field, and right to food-led policy processes, which clearly show the commitment, increased awareness and understanding on the

difference that it makes to prioritize the realization of human rights in food security and nutrition action at country level.

The Right to Food Guidelines are a “human rights-based practical tool” and “do not establish legally binding obligations”,⁵ and as such, is a voluntary document that presents customizable policy guidance for nineteen areas of action conducive to the realization of the right to adequate food. The Guidelines “aim to guarantee the availability of food in quantity and quality sufficient to satisfy the dietary needs of individuals; physical and economic accessibility for everyone, including vulnerable groups, to adequate food, free from unsafe substances and acceptable within a given culture; or the means of its procurement”.⁶ The Guidelines introduced a blueprint that has influenced the global agenda to eradicate hunger and malnutrition over the past 15 years and is still relevant to today’s global efforts towards the achievement of the SDGs. Rather than marking an end point, the adoption of the Right to Food Guidelines has proved to be a moment of transition and evolution, embodying the energy, momentum and commitment that existed at that time. ■

INFOGRAPHIC 1. MILESTONES LEADING TO THE ADOPTION OF THE RIGHT TO FOOD GUIDELINES





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Section 1

A brief introduction to the Right to Food Guidelines and the right to food as a human right

In the wake of the adoption of the Right to Food Guidelines in 2004, a variety of global instruments pertaining to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition and the progressive realization of the right to food have been elaborated and adopted. Among the instruments that follow, while emphasizing the importance given to the fundamental human right to adequate food, one of the key common denominators is that they all either explicitly strive to contribute to its realization through a HRBA – complementing the guidance set out in the Right

to Food Guidelines, or they have been substantially inspired by the Guidelines, their structure, content and process.

“A human rights-based approach requires not only addressing the final outcome of abolishing hunger, but also proposing ways and tools by which that goal is achieved. Application of human rights principles is integral to the process”.

**RIGHT TO FOOD GUIDELINES,
INTRODUCTION, PARA. 19.**

Each of these instruments was negotiated and adopted to address specific priorities put forth by the global development agenda. Collectively, however, they demonstrate the will of the international community to emphasize the importance of the progressive realization of the right to food, a key message set forth by the Right to Food Guidelines.

Over the following years, discussions intensified regarding the need to adapt the CFS to emerging issues and realities. As a result, in October 2009, the reform of the Committee was adopted with a vision to become the “foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for a broad range of committed stakeholders to work together in a coordinated manner” towards “a world free from hunger where countries implement the [Right to Food Guidelines]”.⁷ Shortly after, negotiations among Members led to the elaboration and adoption of the guiding document for the work and priorities of the reformed CFS – namely the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF). The GSF is a “single, living document annually approved by the CFS Plenary” that emphasizes policy coherence, offers guidance and intends to complement and ensure coherence with a handful of key global frameworks, including the Right to Food Guidelines.⁸

Ever since the adoption of the Right to Food Guidelines in 2004 and the reform of the CFS in 2009, a renewed commitment has emerged towards the role of the CFS in driving the global agenda to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, with underlying reference and commitment towards the implementation of this voluntary and non-binding human rights-based instrument.

With negotiations started a few years earlier, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) were endorsed by the CFS in 2012. They further expand upon and explore details of key provisions of the Right to Food Guidelines, particularly Guideline 8. Highlighting the influence the Right to Food Guidelines have had on them,

the VGGT adopt numerous human rights principles for implementation while the overarching objective is to “improve the governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests [...] for the benefit of all, with an emphasis on vulnerable and marginalized people, with the goals of food security and progressive realization of the right to adequate food”.⁹

Meanwhile, given the crucial role of responsible investments towards achieving the right to food for all, the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI) were endorsed by the CFS in 2014. The Right to Food Guidelines underpin the CFS-RAI and develop some guiding elements laid out in the Guidelines a decade earlier, with the objective to “promote responsible investment in agriculture and food systems that contribute to food security and nutrition, thus supporting the progressive realization of the right to adequate food”.¹⁰

In parallel, also in 2014, the Committee on Fisheries led the process that resulted in the endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). The SSF Guidelines are based on international human rights standards and pay “particular attention to vulnerable and marginalized groups and the need to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food”. Furthermore, they explicitly aim to “enhance the contribution of small-scale fisheries to global food security and nutrition and to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food”.¹¹

In October 2015, another multi-year process culminated with the endorsement of a global guiding framework – the CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (FFA). Among its many correlations with the Right to Food Guidelines, the FFA has the overall objective to “improve the food security and nutrition of populations affected by, or at risk of protracted crises in a way that addresses underlying causes, thus contributing to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food”. Furthermore, it specifically “strives to strengthen

policy coherence in line with the progressive realization of the right to adequate food”.¹²

Lastly, the CFS is currently facilitating the drafting process of the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, which should be discussed and negotiated for adoption in the months to come and which should further strengthen a number of provisions from the Right to Food Guidelines adopted 15 years ago, not least among which is to contribute substantially to the realization of the right to adequate food.¹³

Highlighting the importance of the Right to Food Guidelines for the CFS and its Members as well as for the global agenda to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, a Global Thematic Event on the Right to Food Guidelines took place during the 45th session of the CFS in October 2018.¹⁴ During this event, experiences were shared from different parts of the world and discussions were held among stakeholders so as to contribute to monitoring the progress achieved in implementing the Right to Food Guidelines. In addition, 56 experiences were received in the weeks leading up to the event and are outlined in the official document CFS 2018/45/Inf.19,¹⁵ recalling both national and regional processes as well as events that took stock of the implementation of the Right to Food Guidelines. In the plenary session of October 2019, the CFS will address the challenges of meeting the SDGs, in particular focusing on SDG 2, providing a space to reflect on the implications on the right to food.

While the Right to Food Guidelines have had a tremendous impact on the work of the CFS and in defining some of its key areas of action, the Guidelines have also contributed to advancing the momentum towards the realization of the right to food in other global forums.

In 2009, the Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security was adopted at the closing of the global gathering and, among its many features, stresses the commitment of the global community to “collectively accelerate steps to reverse this trend [of alarming number of people suffering from hunger and poverty] and to set the world on a path

INFOGRAPHIC 2. GLOBAL POLICY INSTRUMENTS ROOTED IN THE RIGHT TO FOOD GUIDELINES

2009

CFS Reform



2012

Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT)



2014

Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines)



2014

Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI)



2015

CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crisis (CFS-FFA)



2019
2020

Drafting process of the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition



to achieving the progressive realization of the right to adequate food”. Principle 3 of the Declaration calls for a twin-track approach to immediately ensure freedom from hunger while progressively realizing the right to adequate food.¹⁶ A few years later, in 2014, the Right to Food Guidelines were reiterated and highlighted in the final documents of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), including the Rome Declaration on Nutrition that emphasizes the international human right to adequate food of all.¹⁷ Meanwhile, in 2013, civil society organizations (CSOs) adopted the Vienna+20 Declaration which reaffirms the primacy of human rights and adds to the fundamental contribution made by civil society through the yearly Right to Food Watch.¹⁸ This document is crucial to the efforts to monitor the implementation of the right to adequate food and confers a dedicated section to food and nutrition emphasizing key elements for the realization of the right to adequate food for all, including specific groups.¹⁹

Another area where the Right to Food Guidelines have had a visible influence, is in the elaboration of the SDGs. Through the adoption of Resolution A/66/L.56 – “The Future We Want”, the importance of all human rights, and specifically the right to food as a pillar for achieving sustainable development is reaffirmed. The Resolution emphasizes the global commitment “regarding the right of everyone to have access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger”.²⁰ The adoption of the 2030 Agenda through Resolution A/70/L.1 in September 2015,²¹ offers the global framework of action for policies that strive to address the key challenges of our time over the next 15 years. The Right to Food Guidelines – and subsequent guidance documents outlined above – offer concrete practical guidance on ways to make notable progress towards meeting the 17 SDGs and their targets. Above all, the contribution of the Guidelines may be most valuable to achieving the targets of SDG 2 – End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, commonly referred to as Zero Hunger.

BOX 1. THE SOUTH–SOUTH HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM

Held in Beijing in December 2017, the first South–South Human Rights Forum saw the participation of more than 300 representatives from over 70 countries and international organizations. During the two-day event, representatives from all corners of the world actively participated in discussions on development issues and human rights, including an afternoon dedicated to poverty alleviation and safeguarding the right to food. As captured in the Beijing Declaration, adopted at the end of the Forum, participants insisted on “the unity of universality and particularity of human rights, emphasizing cooperation for development, promoting human rights through development, and calling for joint development of a community of shared future for human beings, which would play an important leading role in the development of human rights in developing countries and the world at large”. What is more, with people at its core, article 3 of the Beijing Declaration calls for “special attention to safeguarding the people's right to subsistence and right to development, especially to achieve a decent standard of living, adequate food, clothing, and clean drinking water, the right to housing, the right to security, work, education, and the right to health and social security”. It further stresses that “[t]he international community should take the eradication of poverty and hunger as the primary task, and strive to solve the problem of insufficient and unsustainable development and create more favourable conditions for the realization of the people's right to development, especially in the developing countries”.¹

The list of global documents that have to some extent been affected or been inspired by the Right to Food Guidelines is much longer, not to mention the regional and subregional documents that reflect the Guidelines’ principles. However, the aforementioned instruments and documents all offer an opportunity to further achieve some of the key objectives contained in the Right to Food Guidelines, starting of course with the progressive realization of the right to food. ■

BOX 2. INTERNATIONAL EVENTS, CAMPAIGNS AND DECLARATIONS

At the global level, many events, campaigns and declarations have provided and will offer prime opportunities to increase awareness of the realization of the right to adequate food for the attainment of the SDGs.

For instance, the UN Decades offer a context and a range of activities that can be conducive to the realization of the right to adequate food. This is particularly true of three current decades, the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016–2025, the International Decade for People of African Descent 2015–2024, as well as the recently launched UN Decade of Family Farming 2019–2028. In addition to those decades, a number of upcoming international years can offer prime platforms for advocacy efforts, including the 2022 UN International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture. With regards to the decades, the case of the UN Decade of Family Farming 2019–2028 is particularly informative, as it represents a convergence of collaboration and efforts from various actors and networks that grew considerably from the International Year of Family Farming in 2014. What is more, the FAO Conference recently proposed that 2021 be the International Year of Fruit and Vegetables,¹ while the 29th September is to become the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste.² Of course, the aforementioned international years and UN Decades come in addition to World Food Day³ which offers annual opportunities to raise awareness, and this year focuses on healthy diets for a zero hunger world.

Meanwhile in 2007, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)⁴ adopted by the UN General Assembly confirmed the importance to self-determined

development for indigenous peoples. It marked an evolution from the Free Prior and Informed Consultation set forth in the 1989 International Labour Organization (ILO)’s “Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169”, towards consent. Consent or lack of consent by indigenous communities in relation to decisions affecting their lives, lands and therefore their ability to ensure their right to food is crucial. More than 140 countries signed UNDRIP while 22 countries have ratified the legally-binding ILO Convention 169.

Finally, international declarations such as the Declaration on the Right to Development, can also reinforce and further recognize the relationship between human rights and, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (Article 1 (2)), emphasize the relevance of the Right to Food Guidelines to guide the progressive realization of the right to food in contexts of national food security. For instance, according to the Declaration on the Right to Development, “appropriate economic and social reforms should be carried out with a view to eradicating all social injustices” (art. 8). Thus, the Declaration calls for governance reforms, including in the financial sector, which are based on a clear understanding of the relationship between the enjoyment of human rights as a prerequisite for peace and security and State policies on issues such as financial regulatory reform, taxation, budgeting and responding to financial crises. These reforms should promote an international enabling environment for development through improved accountability and good governance of financial institutions, effective regulation, transparency and participation. Potential steps in furthering this objective include the use of a human rights-based approach.⁵



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Section 2

Implementing the Right to Food Guidelines: good practices and lessons learned

Since the adoption of the Right to Food Guidelines, stakeholders, and particularly States, have made great strides in developing, adopting, implementing and monitoring actions and processes geared towards the realization of the right to adequate food. Hereafter, a rich diversity of experiences from across the globe, with an attention on the design rather than the implementation phase, will be introduced to showcase key elements of legislative, policy and institutional developments as well as monitoring efforts that have taken place during the past 15 years. Besides

illustrating a sample of innovative and good practices that present different ways and contexts in which considerable steps can be taken towards the realization of the right to adequate food, lessons will also be highlighted regarding key elements of each individual section – legislative, policy and institutional.

Legislative developments

While the Right to Food Guidelines are a non-legally binding and voluntary document, they are

based in international law, as outlined in their introduction. Consequently, some of the Guidelines further expand on elements found in key international instruments. Guideline 7, for example, calls on States to adopt legislative measures to further contribute to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food, echoing the general legal obligation found in Article 2 paragraph 1 of the ICESCR. The Guideline supports strengthening legal and accountability frameworks such as “[a]dministrative, quasi-judicial and judicial mechanisms to provide adequate, effective and prompt remedies accessible, in particular, to members of vulnerable groups”.²²

Based on such guiding elements, there are a handful of specific ways through which legislative actions can be taken, mainly by: including the right to adequate food in the constitution; adopting a framework law on the right to adequate food; and ensuring the coherence of sectoral legislation.

In line with the guidance provided in the Right to Food Guidelines, and especially Guideline 7, several States have taken concrete legislative measures to progressively realize the right to adequate food. Hereafter, a variety of such measures and processes that have taken place in different contexts and through diverse methods are presented. Not intended as an exhaustive list but rather a snapshot of good practices, all the measures mentioned were taken since the adoption of the Right to Food Guidelines in 2004.

Constitutions

Including the right to adequate food in the constitution is the highest form of legal protection and represents a strong statement on the part of a country towards guaranteeing the right to adequate food of its citizens. This inclusion can come about through different ways, whether it be revising the constitution through amendments – as done in **Brazil** in 2010²³ – or adopting a new constitution, such as in **Egypt** in 2014.²⁴ Meanwhile, recognizing the right to adequate food in the constitution can also be done in a number of ways.

The most direct approach is to provide for explicit protection of the right to adequate food or freedom from hunger either for the entire population or solely for specific groups, such as children. Such protection was included recently in **Cuba**, where the new constitution guarantees that “every person has a right to healthy and adequate food” in its article 77.²⁵ **Nepal** promulgated its new constitution in 2015 in which article 36 states explicitly that “[e]ach citizen shall have the right to food”.²⁶ In **Zimbabwe**, the 2013 constitution guarantees that “[e]very person has the right to sufficient food” in its article 77 while article 81 further stipulates the right to nutrition of every child.²⁷ Meanwhile, in **Mexico’s** constitution, article 4 recognizes the right to nutritious, sufficient and quality food of every person.²⁸ Article 36 in **Fiji’s** constitution foresees “the right of every person to be free from hunger, to have adequate food of acceptable quality”²⁹ and article 23 in the **Maldives’** constitution states the right of every citizen to “adequate and nutritious food”.³⁰

Another approach is to afford implicit protection of the right to adequate food through other broader human rights. Those broader human rights are generally considered as incorporating or being critical to the realization of the right to adequate food and include rights to: an adequate standard of living; well-being; a means necessary to live a dignified life; development; or a standard of living not below the subsistence level. For instance, in **Ecuador**, while article 13 offers an explicit guarantee of the right to food, article 32 guarantees the right to health “whose realization is correlated to the enjoyment of other rights, among which the right to [...] food”.³¹ Meanwhile, in addition to article 16 explicitly guaranteeing the right to food, **the Plurinational State of Bolivia’s** article 46 foresees the right of every person to dignified work that guarantees a “just, fair and satisfactory salary, which ensures a life with dignity for the person and his/her family”.³² Similarly, article 62 in the **Dominican Republic** guarantees the right of every worker to a “fair and sufficient salary that enables a life with dignity and to cover basic material, social and intellectual

necessities for [him/her] and [his/her] family”, which complements the explicit recognition of the right to food found in article 57.³³

Another way to enshrine the realization of the right to adequate food is through directive principles of State policy. Understood to be non-directly enforceable by a court, such provisions can directly or implicitly put the right to adequate food as an overarching objective of the State. An exhaustive example of directive principles of national policy is found in the 2010 constitution of **Kenya** which, in its article 21, stipulates that it is “a fundamental duty of the State and every State organ to observe, respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights and fundamental freedoms in the Bill of Rights” and that the State “shall take legislative, policy and other measures, including the setting of standards, to achieve the progressive realization of the rights guaranteed under Article 43”, which guarantees the right of every person “to be free from hunger, and to have adequate food of acceptable quality”.³⁴ Another specific example resides in article 110 of the constitution of **Panama** that mentions the primary responsibility of the State to “develop a national food and nutrition policy that ensures an optimal nutritional status for all the population”, complementing the explicit protection found in article 56.2.³⁵

The fourth way relies on the status of international obligations in the national legislative order. Whether through the direct applicability of international instruments at national level, through the recognition of international commitments as having the same status as constitutional provisions or through the primacy of international obligations over national laws, these are all important means provided in the constitution to further protect the right to adequate food at national level. One such approach has been used notably by the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** and **Niger**, which, in addition to both having explicit guarantees of the right to adequate food, indicate that international treaties and agreements have primacy over national laws respectively in article 215³⁶ and article 171.³⁷

National laws

While constitutions offer the highest form of legal guarantees to the right to adequate food, by including the latter in legislation, and especially framework laws, provides clarity and contributes to rendering it operational in practice. Moreover, adopting and reviewing relevant sectoral legislation is an important way to ensure efficiency towards the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

Since the adoption of the Right to Food Guidelines in 2004, several States have taken action to include the right to adequate food in their national legislation, whether it be through adopting framework laws or ensuring the coherence of key sectoral laws. Below is a sample of such efforts that have taken place in recent years.

Framework laws

Given the multidimensional and cross-sectoral nature of the right to adequate food, a framework law elaborates on its general principles, assigns responsibilities to different parties while it ensures coordination and direction between different stakeholders. What is more, it can provide the scope and the content of the right to adequate food, set out the obligations for State authorities and responsibilities for private actors, establish the necessary institutional mechanisms, provide grounds for redress while providing the legal basis for subsidiary legislation and other necessary measures.³⁸

A framework law also benefits from a multistakeholder approach, as outlined by the Right to Food Guidelines. This approach informs the interests and concerns pertaining to the realization of the right to adequate food. Furthermore, a framework law contributes to improved policy coherence and can ensure that the right to adequate food is central to national development strategy.³⁹ Different countries have adopted different approaches and some have yielded innovative experiences, as shown below.

The **Dominican Republic** adopted the Law for Food and Nutrition Security and Sovereignty in

2016. This provides a detailed definition of the right to adequate food and establishes the institutional framework for the elaboration and development of policies for food and nutrition security and sovereignty as instruments to respect, protect and exercise the right to adequate food for all people without distinction, in accordance with human rights principles.⁴⁰ In **Cabo Verde**, Law No. 37/IX/2018 was adopted in order to define and guarantee the right to adequate food for all, while establishing the principles, norms and proceedings to guarantee its effective implementation as well as to guide the implementation of the national food and nutrition security policy.⁴¹

While most advances have taken place at national level, innovative practices have also been seen at subnational and regional level. For example, the Food Security and Nutrition Act 2011 of **Zanzibar in the United Republic of Tanzania**, spells out the obligations of the authorities towards the realization of the right to adequate food for all without discrimination while it establishes the institutional structure for its implementation through the creation of the National Food Security and Nutrition Council.⁴² At the regional level, the **Latin American and Caribbean Parliament** (PARLATINO) adopted a regional framework law on the right to food, food security and food sovereignty that notably provides guidance to States on the inclusion of a HRBA in national legal frameworks. The regional framework law strives to ensure the full exercise of the right to adequate food through the creation of the judicial framework of reference for the elaboration of national policies and strategies on the right to adequate food.⁴³

Sectoral laws

As the realization of the right to adequate food is the result of conducive actions in a number of sectoral areas, ensuring the coherence of sectoral laws with the right to adequate food enhances the efficiency of efforts and hampers contradicting actions. Many sectoral areas are pivotal, such as those pertaining to livelihoods and resources (Right to Food Guideline 8, which includes labour 8A, land 8B, water 8C), social

protection (Right to Food Guideline 14), and trade (Right to Food Guidelines, Section III), to name a few.

8.1 States should facilitate sustainable, non-discriminatory and secure access and utilization of resources consistent with their national law and with international law and protect the assets that are important for people's livelihoods. States should respect and protect the rights of individuals with respect to resources such as land, water, forests, fisheries and livestock without any discrimination. Where necessary and appropriate, States should carry out land reforms and other policy reforms consistent with their human rights obligations and in accordance with the rule of law in order to secure efficient and equitable access to land and to strengthen pro-poor growth. Special attention may be given to groups such as pastoralists and indigenous people and their relation to natural resources.

8.2 States should take steps so that members of vulnerable groups can have access to opportunities and economic resources in order to participate fully and equally in the economy.

8.3 States should pay particular attention to the specific access problems of women and of vulnerable, marginalized and traditionally disadvantaged groups, including all persons affected by HIV/AIDS. States should take measures to protect all people affected by HIV/AIDS from losing their access to resources and assets.

RIGHT TO FOOD GUIDELINE 8 ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND ASSETS

While the inclusion of all actions taken by countries around the globe on one or several of the aforementioned sectoral areas cannot be accommodated here, a handful of distinct examples follow. In **India**, for instance, the adoption of the National Food Security Act in 2013 created entitlements to food-related assistance and established grievance mechanisms, two crucial elements for the realization of the right to adequate food.⁴⁴ Another tendency has been to legislate on school feeding using a HRBA, which proves critical

not only to the realization of the right to adequate food of children, but also their right to health and to education. One such example is **Peru**, where Law No. 30021, adopted in 2013, aims to promote healthy food for children and adolescents by regulating advertisement and the food available in schools, by encouraging nutrition education as well as physical activity, and by creating a monitoring institution to gather and analyze relevant data on their nutritional status.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, a number of countries have adopted concrete measures to address the pressing issue of food loss and waste,⁴⁶ such as in **France**⁴⁷ and **Italy**⁴⁸ where decisive

measures have been taken to adopt specific laws. Another area is exemplified by **Montenegro**, where the Law on Food Security primarily addresses food safety and consumer protection while recognizing the right of every person to have guaranteed access to safe and healthy food.⁴⁹

Current processes

As illustrated above, important developments have taken place throughout the years. However, processes that culminate in the amendment of a constitution or the adoption of a framework law on the right to

BOX 3. NEPAL – AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT TO FOOD ACROSS THE BOARD

The steps taken in Nepal show the importance of an enabling environment allowing for political commitment and social engagement to flourish and, despite a volatile political context, for technical capacity on the right to adequate food of relevant authorities and stakeholders to be built over time and across the board.

Nepal committed to guarantee the right to food as a fundamental right in its *Interim Constitution* of 2007. Its Supreme Court was one of the first national courts to actively adjudicate and provide legal remedies on the right to food as was the case in April 2011 when the Court published a key decision on this matter.¹ A long, constitution-making process offered an historic opportunity in 2015 to enshrine the right to food in the new national constitution under article 36 and related provisions.

In 2013, three policy instruments included recommendations for future legislation on the right to food, creating the basis for that demand which was later satisfied: the 20-year Agricultural Development Strategy, the Food and Nutrition Security Plan of Action of Nepal (FNSP) and the Thirteenth Plan (2013/2014 to 2015/2016) by the National Planning. In addition, in 2014, the Office of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers included the right to food as an objective in its National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP). Finally, the Zero Hunger Challenge 2025 initiative

in Nepal was launched during a visit of FAO Director-General to Nepal in March 2016, and includes the right to food as the overall objective.

A number of noteworthy policy processes improved the framework of protection, respect and fulfilment of this fundamental human right: a harmonized multistakeholder Monitoring Framework for the Right to Food in Nepal, involving government institutions, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), parliamentary committees, Civil Society Organizations and FAO, officially endorsed and adopted by the NHRC and launched in Kathmandu in 2016 by the Prime Minister himself; the first Food Security Policy ever drafted in Nepal, firmly grounded in human rights, drafted and finalized and, as of December 2017, awaiting approval; and finally, the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty Act 2018 entered into force in September 2018.

Despite all the advances, much remains to be done to ensure the implementation of the new constitution and the recently promulgated and enacted rules and regulations. To this end, concrete resources need to be allocated to continue with the country's demonstrated openness across the board, involving a multitude of actors, sectors and distributing responsibilities to respect, protect and fulfil this human right to a variety of institutions.

adequate food can take time. Sometimes spanning several years, the inclusive and participatory nature of the processes can in turn provide an improved opportunity for its efficiency and sustainability. As such, a process of including the right to adequate food in the constitution is currently ongoing in **Burkina Faso**, while one towards the adoption of a framework law on the right to adequate food is underway in both **Costa Rica** and **Uruguay**. What is more, processes that may have spanned years without yielding the desired outcome can be resumed after lengthy pauses, as is likely in **Uganda** with the framework law on the right to adequate food.

Policy developments

While legislation, as seen previously, allows for crystallization of the right to adequate food for all,

to better withstand evolving political contexts, policy measures are needed that can effectively contribute to its realization.

“In order to achieve the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, States should promote broad-based economic development that is supportive of their food security policies. States should establish policy goals and benchmarks based on the food security needs of their population”.

RIGHT TO FOOD GUIDELINE 2.1

As a policy guidance document, the Right to Food Guidelines offer a variety of measures that can be taken by policymakers in order to elaborate, adopt, implement and monitor policies and strategies in an efficient manner to progressively realize the right to adequate food. Policy processes are pivotal

INFOGRAPHIC 3. LEGISLATING FOR THE RIGHT TO FOOD: FROM FRAMEWORK LAWS TO SECTORAL LAWS

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION LAWS

- ▶ Guatemala, 2005
- ▶ Latin American and Caribbean Parliament, 2011
- ▶ India, 2013
- ▶ Cabo Verde, 2018

SECTORAL LAWS

School feeding laws

- ▶ Brazil, 2009
- ▶ Latin American and Caribbean Parliament, 2013
- ▶ Cabo Verde, 2015
- ▶ India, 2015
- ▶ Bulgaria, 2016

Family farming laws

- ▶ Argentina, 2015
- ▶ Latin American and Caribbean Parliament, 2016
- ▶ Burkina Faso, 2018
- ▶ Philippines, 2018

Labelling and marketing laws

- ▶ Chile, 2015
- ▶ Thailand, 2017
- ▶ Nigeria, 2019

Food loss and waste laws

- ▶ France, 2016
- ▶ Italy, 2016
- ▶ Dominican Republic, 2016
- ▶ Japan, 2019

in themselves and may have distinct features that are more conducive to the realization of the right to adequate food. While the formulation, implementation and monitoring phases are crucial and have a decisive impact on the effective realization of the right to adequate food, advances that have taken place since the adoption of the Guidelines will be primarily reported from the policy design phase.

“States, as appropriate and in consultation with relevant stakeholders and pursuant to their national laws, should consider adopting a national human-rights based strategy for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security as part of an overarching national development strategy, including poverty reduction strategies, where they exist”.

RIGHT TO FOOD GUIDELINE 3.1

As stated in Guideline 2.2, starting from its **design**, a policy that is conducive to the realization of the right to adequate food is based on a thorough assessment “in consultation with key stakeholders, [of] the economic and social situation, including the degree of food insecurity and its causes, the nutrition situation and food safety”.⁵⁰

“These strategies could include objectives, targets, benchmarks and timeframes; and actions to formulate policies, identify and mobilize resources, define institutional mechanisms, allocate responsibilities, coordinate the activities of different actors, and provide for monitoring mechanisms. As appropriate, such strategies could address all aspects of the food system, including the production, processing, distribution, marketing and consumption of safe food. They could also address access to resources and to markets as well as parallel measures in other fields. These strategies should, in particular, address the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, as well as special situations such as natural disasters and emergencies”.

RIGHT TO FOOD GUIDELINE 3.3

A policy design which is human rights-based tends to include specific components, including:

- ▶ A high level of **accountability**, based on clear identification of **responsibilities** and definition of **timeframes** for achievement of objectives and goals;
- ▶ Effective horizontal and vertical **coordination** among government institutions and between national and subnational levels of government;
- ▶ Meaningful **participation** of civil society and of representatives of the most food-insecure and marginalized population groups;
- ▶ A high level of **political commitment** and support which translates into adequate and sustained **funding** of policy measures; and
- ▶ Effective **monitoring** of emerging threats to the protection and realization of the right to adequate food, and of progress made with the realization of the right to adequate food.⁵¹

These **components** are found throughout different features of the policy and strategy design and each have intrinsic connections with specific guidelines, among which: the preamble of the policy document,⁵² identification of food-insecure and vulnerable groups and the inequities that need to be addressed,⁵³ vision statement,⁵⁴ policy objectives,⁵⁵ priority areas of action,⁵⁶ guiding principles for policy implementation,⁵⁷ institutional structures for policy coordination and implementation,⁵⁸ and policy monitoring and evaluation.^{59/60}

Mindful of the aforementioned components and the different **features** of policy design, some of the progress that has taken place over the past decade and a half will be highlighted according to **seven themes** that encompass most of those components and are included in the various features of the policy design.⁶¹ A limited sample of policies and strategies shown below have explicitly included key elements of the Right to Food Guidelines while being conducive to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

1 Political commitment and legal obligations with respect to the right to adequate food

In **Grenada**, the Food and Nutrition Security Policy of 2013 explicitly recalls the country's obligations and commitments regarding the right to adequate food in its Preamble, including specific reference to the Right to Food Guidelines, adding that "the Government reaffirms its commitment to the protection and realization of the Right to Food". In addition, the policy sets out a vision to "fully recognize the Right to Food and to ensure that all Grenadians, at all times, have physical, economic, and social access to safe, nutritious, culturally acceptable, and affordable food in sufficient quantities to meet their dietary needs for an active and healthy life".⁶²

In **Jamaica**, the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy recalls the ratification of key international instruments for the realization of the right to adequate food, and it links it to the constitutionally guaranteed right to life in Jamaica while recognizing it as "a fundamental right of all citizens, regardless of their socio-economic status". What is more, the policy has the vision for "all Jamaicans and residents of Jamaica at all times [to] have universal, physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary and food preferences for an active and healthy life" in addition to the long-term goal "to ensure the full protection and realization of the right to food for all".⁶³

2 Equity and food-insecure and vulnerable people

Based on a national food security assessment, the **Guyana** Food and Nutrition Security Strategy comprehensively details a number of food-insecure and vulnerable groups including: a) subsistence farmers (coastal, riverain, hinterland); b) small-scale miners; c) hucksters and fisherfolk; d) low wage earners (seasonal or temporary workers, particularly in urban areas); e) loggers; f) cane cutters; g) single parent females; h) Amerindians; i) street children; and j) pensioners. This proves crucial for the strategy as it emphasizes a focus on vulnerable

groups throughout its objectives with the overall goal "to improve the health and well-being of all persons living in Guyana through enhanced Food and Nutrition Security".⁶⁴

3 Progressive realization of the right to food, which combines findings with respect to the vision statement and the policy objectives

In **Bhutan**, the Food and Nutrition Security Policy of 2014 envisages that "[a]ll people living in Bhutan at all times have physical, economic and social access to safe and adequate nutritious food for a healthy and active life contributing to realization of Gross National Happiness".⁶⁵ The right to adequate food is part of the guiding principles, while the overarching policy goals and objectives detail specific aspects of the right to adequate food.

4 High priority policy actions

In **El Salvador**, the Food and Nutrition Security Policy 2011–2015 has as its main objective to guarantee the right to healthy food for all, with urgent attention to the most vulnerable. Its specific objectives clarify relevant facets conducive to the effective realization of the right to adequate food while a number of guiding principles for its implementation are set out. First is the policy to promote the realization of the right to adequate food for all. Among its priority policy actions, strong emphasis is placed on ensuring and facilitating the key role of small-scale farmers as well as the inclusion and active participation of women, youth and indigenous people. In addition, there are concrete actions on pivotal areas for the realization of the right to adequate food such as decent employment, social protection, nutrition and healthy eating habits.⁶⁶

5 Policy implementation principles and good governance

In **Sierra Leone**, the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy 2012–2016 sets out a number of human rights-based implementation principles: "that adequate food and nutrition is a fundamental human right", "that gender considerations and the needs of

BOX 4. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE PROGRESSIVE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD

Indigenous peoples' right to food depends crucially on respect for their livelihoods and traditions, which are firmly rooted in their collective rights to ancestral lands, territories and natural resources. The Right to Food Guidelines were visionary by including in Guideline 8.1 the nexus for indigenous peoples and pastoralists between land, natural resources, territory and livelihoods and their right to food:

"Where necessary and appropriate, States should carry out land reforms and other policy reforms consistent with their human rights obligations and in accordance with the rule of law in order to secure efficient and equitable access to land and to strengthen pro-poor growth. Special attention may be given to groups such as pastoralists and indigenous peoples and their relation to natural resources".

There is not an official figure on how many indigenous peoples inhabit the planet. However, different estimates concur that there are more than 370 million indigenous peoples living in 90 countries and spread across seven regions. They speak an overwhelming majority of the world's estimated 7 000 languages and represent 5 000 different cultures. In India alone, the official census accounts for more than 100 million Adivasi or tribal peoples. If indigenous peoples were to be together in a single country this would be the third most populous in the world. Their richness in traditional knowledge, languages, and diversity contrasts sharply with the fact that they account for 15 percent of the world's poorest.¹

While Indigenous peoples are the custodians of ecosystems and natural resources, hosting 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity, in most countries where data exists, hunger and malnutrition are disproportionately higher among indigenous peoples than among the non-indigenous population.

Like many other population groups in the world, such as pastoralists, fishers, family farmers, there is not an official definition of the term "indigenous peoples". However, UNDRIP article 33 specifies that indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions (article 33 (1)).² This important article complements ILO Convention

169 criteria, to guide the identification of indigenous peoples in any given country. Said criteria, identified in ILO 169, underline the importance of land, territories and resources in the shaping of indigenous people's identities, livelihood practices, food, and knowledge systems. It must be remembered however, that several countries around the world, despite having endorsed 2007 UNDRIP at international level, do not recognize the existence of indigenous peoples in their own countries, thus contributing to the lack of respect of basic rights, including the right to food.³

At country level, in Indonesia, the 2012 decision of the Constitutional Court No. 35/PUU-X/2012 (CR.35) was a turning point for the restoration of the rights of *Masyarakat Adat* (Indigenous Peoples) to own and manage their customary territories, in particular forests. However, the CR.35 has not yet been implemented cohesively through national regulations to support the existence and recognition of Indigenous Peoples in Indonesia and guarantee their access to their ancestral forests. By 2018, 17 244 hectares of forests have been allocated to 33 indigenous communities, representing 0.43 percent of the 4 million hectares identified by the Ministry of Forestry as a target in 2018. Considering that on average only 11 *Hutan Adat*⁴ are conferred per year, it is hoped that the rhythm of implementation will increase in years to come.

Indigenous peoples are not vulnerable populations per se. For thousands of years they have managed their territories and natural resources in ingenious and dynamic ways that have allowed them to inhabit the same territories, preserving their natural resources and making them available for future generations. The systematic and systemic lack of recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, in particular their rights to self-identification, collective tenure and others, is what places indigenous peoples in situations of vulnerability, poverty, conflict and food insecurity. With migration to the cities, forced displacement and the loss of their traditional livelihoods and habitats, indigenous peoples are now eating foods that are not part of their culture or habits. Once again, a key of the human right to food is adequacy; Right to Food Guideline 10.10 reminds us of this.

all vulnerable groups are integral to all components of the policy”, that the Government “is accountable and obligated to improve the food security situation in the country as set out in national laws and international conventions, treaties and resolutions on the right to food”, and “that in the planning, budgeting and implementation of the policy, a rights-based approach will be adopted to promote and protect the right to adequate food and nutrition, ensuring the participation of rights-holders”.⁶⁷

6 Participation and policy coordination

In **Peru**, the National Strategy on Food and Nutrition Security 2013–2021 was developed through a participative and multistakeholder process under the leadership of the Multisectoral Commission on Food and Nutrition Security. The Strategy adopts the right to adequate food as its first implementation framework, with the evolution of the right to adequate food at global level detailed as well as its normative content, including the pivotal role of the Right to Food Guidelines in achieving the objectives of the Strategy. In addition, it includes a detailed analysis of disaggregated data on vulnerable groups. A number of lessons learned from the elaboration process of the Strategy are set out and notably include the importance of taking proactive measures to ensure the social inclusion of vulnerable groups as well as the need to establish synergies between the different levels of government, as well as with civil society and the private sector, given the multisectoral nature of the issues.⁶⁸

7 Policy monitoring and accountability

In **Uganda**, the National Food and Nutrition Strategy dedicates a specific chapter to monitoring and evaluation, which includes underlying principles such as to “[i]mplement the UFNS monitoring process based on human rights principles” while it explicitly calls for the “rights-based monitoring of the right to adequate food in Uganda”. It further details the process, emphasizing that “[m]onitoring the implementation of the right to adequate food: (a) directly involves stakeholders, i.e. duty-bearers and rights-holders;

BOX 5. COLLECTIVE ACTION TO ADVANCE THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD

A prime example of collective action to advance the right to adequate food is found in the Dimitra Clubs. A human rights-based and gender-transformative approach, the Dimitra Clubs aim to facilitate rural people’s empowerment and advance gender equality in rural areas. By promoting collective action to achieve the SDGs – in particular SDGs 1, 2 and 5-, the Dimitra Clubs are informal groups of women and men, girls and boys, who convene to discuss common problems and collectively look for solutions to be applied with local resources. Freedom of speech, access to information, gender equality, inclusive participation and action are guiding principles of the clubs.

Today there are over 3 500 Dimitra Clubs with about 105 000 members (60 percent being women) in seven countries of sub-Saharan Africa (Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal). It is estimated that more than 2.5 million people are positively impacted by the clubs. Meanwhile, the impact of the clubs has been assessed in various areas, such as food security and nutrition, gender equality, social and economic empowerment as well as women’s and youth’s leadership.¹

Another interesting instance of collective action took place in Malawi. In the wake of a visit by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food and the recommendations put forth in the mission report, in addition to support provided by a number of UN agencies, important steps were taken to meet the demands from civil society movements on land rights issues. It was the fruit of greater involvement and active mobilization of civil society on fundamental issues of access to and ownership of land and the nexus with cultural traditions for people’s ability to feed themselves and their families in dignity. As a result of collective action on land rights issues, key steps were made towards preserving and ensuring the right to adequate food of those communities.²

(b) focuses on policy and programme impacts and processes; and (c) provides information with which rights-holders can hold duty-bearers accountable, while strengthening rights-holders' capacity for self-action". It also adds that "[h]olding duty-bearers accountable involves establishing clear and verifiable benchmarks against which progress can be assessed". Furthermore, it stresses that the "monitoring process must be participatory, empowering, transparent, and provide a basis for rights-holders to hold duty-bearers accountable". The obligations and commitments of the State towards the realization of the right to adequate food are stressed while a number of specific vulnerable groups are identified throughout the different areas addressed by the Strategy.⁶⁹

Current processes

The 2016 signing of the Agreement to End Conflict and Build Peace in **Colombia**, provides the impetus to advance important progress towards the realization of the right to adequate food. Under the first pillar of the Agreement, national plans for integral rural development have to be elaborated in order to improve the livelihoods and standard of living of communities in rural areas. This pillar also refers to the establishment of a system conducive to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food. Given the interlinkages between the realization of the right to adequate food, rural development and peace and security, the Agreement provides a strong and additional basis to complement the existing legislative, policy and institutional structure already in place in Colombia towards eradicating poverty and guaranteeing the right to adequate food of all.

Institutional developments

While legislative and policy developments are of prime importance to the realization of the right to adequate food, the central role of institutions in planning, implementing, coordinating and monitoring the efforts aimed at operationalizing the Right to Food Guidelines cannot be understated. Moreover, the linkages between policy and legislative developments and

institutional developments are intrinsic and plentiful, the latter often being established by the former.

"States, where appropriate, should assess the mandate and performance of relevant public institutions and, where necessary, establish, reform or improve their organization and structure to contribute to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security".

RIGHT TO FOOD GUIDELINE 5.1

Two categories of institutions are presented forthwith to highlight some of the advances that have taken place since the adoption of the Right to Food Guidelines: executive and legislative bodies and human rights institutions. International Financial Institutions (IFIs) will also briefly be discussed to show how, at supra-national level, by referring to global policy tools such as the Right to Food Guidelines, their mandates can play a fundamental role in advancing human rights and strengthening the efforts to realize the right to adequate food and attain the SDGs.

"Recognizing the primary responsibility of States for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food, States are encouraged to apply a multistakeholder approach to national food security to identify the roles of and involve all relevant stakeholders, encompassing civil society and the private sector, drawing together their know-how with a view to facilitating the efficient use of resources".

RIGHT TO FOOD GUIDELINE 6.1

When looking at national institutions, four essential dimensions stand out as catalysts of efficiency and sustainability: capacity, participation, accountability and transparency.⁷⁰ In addition, current processes will highlight two recent trends that involve a diversity of stakeholders in efforts to progressively realize the right to adequate food, as recommended by Guideline 6 on stakeholders: parliamentary alliances against hunger and malnutrition and observatories on the right to adequate food.

BOX 6. THE PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA – INSTITUTIONS MANDATED TO THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHT TO FOOD

From 2009 Bolivia (Plurinational State of) has taken a major step towards the realization of the right to food by including the latter in its Constitution. Over the past years, the Government moved forward with an ambitious plan to reduce disparity and end poverty in the country. This political commitment is complemented by a wide-ranging suite of policies and programmes designed to end hunger in the country. Moreover, Bolivian representatives have been outspoken and distinguished advocates of human rights within the United Nations system – most notably in support of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

The country's Constitution tried to summarize and institutionalize all those ideas in the form of rules or basic principles, concepts belonging to indigenous cultural tradition, expressing the idea of harmony between self, others and the cosmos, representing the first attempts of a concrete movement. The Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia essentially claims the primacy of "Mother Earth". The right to food is fully embedded in its Article 16.1 (together with water) and 16.11, as an inclusive right, not simply as a right to a minimum ration of calories, proteins and other specific nutrients, but one that refers to the element of adequacy, meaning quantity, quality and appropriateness, considering cultural aspects, as well as the physiology of the individual.

At national level, the National Council for Food and Nutrition (*Consejo Nacional de*

Alimentación y Nutrición – CONAN), created in 2003 and reformed in 2006, has an institutional mandate to implement the right to food. Between 2006 and 2015 CONAN and its Technical Committee (CT-CONAN) have been key in ensuring the inclusion of the right to food into multisectoral programmes and projects, as well as into national food security policies and plans and subnational and municipal development plans, and finally into framework laws. Through 2010 Framework Law for Autonomy and Decentralization, subnational and municipal councils (CODAN and COMAN) became more empowered to support, advise and incorporate the right to food in programming.

The office of the *Defensoría del Pueblo* (ombudsman), which functions as a national human rights institution since its establishment, has been very supportive of the right to food. The Bolivia's National Human Rights Council, inaugurated in 2010, was responsible to implement a five-year National Human Rights Action Plan (*Plan Nacional De Acción de Derechos Humanos*).

Over the years, the Plurinational State of Bolivia has showed significant willingness to operationalize the progressive realization of the right to food through legal, policy, and institutional frameworks. The progress and established frameworks call for additional efforts, accountability, resources and capacity to ensure that full enjoyment of the right to food is achieved for the entire population.

Executive and legislative bodies

As mentioned mainly in Guideline 5, executive and legislative bodies serve to act upon or coordinate the implementation of policies and programmes on the right to adequate food. Those bodies mostly come in two types: food and nutrition security councils and coordination institutions. Guideline 5.2 further adds that these institutions can "ensure the concerted implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans and programmes"⁷¹ from relevant

government ministries, agencies and offices. Over the past decade and a half, a considerable number of such institutions have either been created or consolidated and have had a fundamental role in facilitating the progress made on the realization of the right to adequate food.

In **Brazil**, the National Food and Nutrition Security System (SISAN) was established by Law No. 11.346 of 2006 with a clear mandate to "formulate and implement policies, plans, programmes, and

BOX 7. MILAN URBAN FOOD POLICY PACT

An innovative and encompassing process at global level with ramifications at local level is the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), which was endorsed by mayors and representatives of local governments as a legacy of the 2015 Expo “Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life”. The Milan Pact explicitly states in its first commitment that “[w]e will work to develop sustainable food systems that are inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse, that provide healthy and affordable food to all people in a human rights-based framework, that minimize waste and conserve biodiversity while adapting to and mitigating impacts of climate change”. To this day, just under 200 cities are signatories of the Milan Pact, having thus established a network of committed authorities and populations that share ideas and innovative practices on a range of areas that are crucial to the effective realization of the right to adequate food of the population. FAO, the MUFPP and EStá (Economia e Sostenibilità) research centre, released a narrative report on the role and

involvement of Milan Pact Cities in national decision-making processes and in particular on the evolving food policy and practice as seen in 157 cities and thus in the transformation of municipal and national food systems.¹ A monitoring framework is being developed in a participatory manner with areas of recommended actions, outcomes and impact areas as well as quantitative and qualitative performance indicators.² The MUFPP is also promoting a regionalization process to increase dialogue and improve regional food governance. The First Regional Forum of Latin American Signatory Cities of the MUFPP was hosted by the city of Rio de Janeiro from 29 to 31 May 2019.³ Lastly, many of the 193 MUFPP cities have developed urban food systems capable of reducing emissions. Milan, the chair of the MUFPP, has committed to solving these issues, promoting healthy and sustainable diets through school catering. Cities are leading the way to a more sustainable future, and food can be the key to a long-term climate change solution.⁴

actions which seek to guarantee the human right to adequate food”.⁷² The institution has a critical role to play in advancing the realization of the right to adequate food, especially considering that Brazil has a constitutional guarantee and a framework law on the right to adequate food, numerous sectoral laws that have an important impact on the realization of the right to adequate food as well as policies, plans and programmes that implement various facets of the Right to Food Guidelines. What is more, SISAN is formed by a myriad of stakeholders, including the public sector and civil society as well as unions, the federal district, municipalities and private organizations.

Meanwhile, with a multifaceted approach to guarantee the right to adequate food, **Guatemala** has also promoted the participation from civil society representatives within its National Food and Nutrition Security System (SINASAN). As enshrined in the Decree 32-2005,⁷³ the Social Consultation and Participation Authority (INCOPAS) ensures that

the voices and perspectives of civil society are taken into account within the National Food and Nutrition Security Council (CONASAN) as well as in the different actions to eradicate hunger and malnutrition.⁷⁴

Human rights institutions

Detailed in Guideline 18, national human rights institutions play a central role in the realization of the right to adequate food. Whether it be through monitoring the implementation of measures, providing detailed recommendations or developing education materials on the right to adequate food, national human rights institutions exist across the globe with a majority of countries having such institutions and with most of them meeting the highest standards of compliance, as detailed in the 1991 Paris Principles.⁷⁵

In **South Africa**, the Human Rights Commission has a clear mandate to “promote respect for human rights and a culture of human rights; promote the

BOX 8. SIERRA LEONE – CREATING COMMUNITY-BASED DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISMS FOR MEDIATION AND RESOLUTION OF FOOD SECURITY AND RIGHT TO FOOD CHALLENGES

The advances in Sierra Leone showed how the provision of free paralegal services to a community enabled local solutions to challenges while reinforcing accountability and transparency. Led by the Access to Justice Law Centre, the experience demonstrated an alternative way of resolving disputes between citizens and communities and public administration officials where formal litigation was too costly, inaccessible or not culturally acceptable.

The experience evolved in four stages: raising awareness on rights and introducing the role of paralegals in the community; establishing voluntary community oversight boards whose members acted as a gateway to the community and as a communication channel between the Law Centre's mobile paralegals and the community; identifying, discussing and mediating cases through paralegals; and referring complex or unresolved issues to the supervising attorney at the Law Centre.

In particular, mediation involved community members, third parties linked to the State and stakeholders operating in the district.

In one of the 11 cases reported, a dispute between a landowner and the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute was resolved. A second case was against a construction company that had appropriated properties belonging to three community members and destroyed crops on these properties by depositing gravel, without compensating the landowners. This case, which implicated the Sierra Leone Roads Authority and required the cooperation of the Kambia District Council, also obtained positive results through paralegal involvement. It showed how community members were empowered to report issues that affect their livelihoods and that would have otherwise been neglected. A process in which communities assumed control in addressing these issues initiated through the establishment of community oversight boards to monitor the activities of paralegals and assess whether these activities bring benefits, to provide information to the community and to create a learning environment for peaceful mediation of disputes involving food, through awareness raising on rights.

protection, development and attainment of human rights; and monitor and assess the observance of human rights in the Republic". Adding to the transparency provided by its mandate, the Commission has the power to "investigate and report on the observance of human rights; take steps and secure appropriate redress where human rights have been violated; carry out research; and educate". What is more, with regards to accountability, the Commission has the yearly duty to "require relevant organs of state to provide [it] with information on the measures that they have taken towards the realization of the rights in the Bill of Rights concerning [...] food", the right to adequate food being explicitly guaranteed in the national constitution.⁷⁶

Judicial and quasi-judicial bodies

While the aforementioned institutions have a primary role in ensuring the promotion, implementation and coordination of efforts towards the realization of the right to adequate food, judicial and quasi-judicial bodies play a key role when violations occur. As outlined in Guideline 7.2, judicial and quasi-judicial bodies are the main avenues to ensure that victims of right to food violations have access to "adequate, effective and prompt remedies".⁷⁷ Foremost among such bodies are national courts, which are entrusted with upholding national legislation as well as international obligations, where applicable.

In **Kenya's** 2010 Constitution, not only is the human right to adequate food explicitly guaranteed – as previously described – but the court is granted a clear

mandate to enforce and ensure said guarantee. As such, article 23 stipulates that “[t]he High Court has jurisdiction, in accordance with Article 165, to hear and determine applications for redress of a denial, violation or infringement of, or threat to, a right or fundamental freedom in the Bill of Rights”.⁷⁸

International Financial Institutions

According to the Charter of the United Nations, international cooperation in solving international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems is one of the purposes of the United Nations (Article 1 (3)). Articles 2, 55 and 56 emphasize that all Member States have certain obligations that they need to meet both individually and collectively. In particular, all Member States shall take joint and separate action to achieve the purposes of the United Nations. IFIs, regional associations and other actors that facilitate collective action by States are key players in advancing international development. As their activities have an impact on development and the protection and promotion of human rights, States must ensure that their collective actions contribute to the creation of an international enabling environment for development. Among the IFIs, human rights form part of the overall mandates of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European Investment Bank (EIB). In addition, the 2012 Food Aid Convention was renegotiated and renamed the Food Assistance Convention, and it specifically refers to the Right to Food Guidelines.⁷⁹

Current processes

Food and nutrition security councils, coordination institutions, human rights institutions as well as judicial and quasi-judicial bodies have traditionally been the fora that best represented the institutional framework around the implementation of the Right to Food Guidelines and actions towards the realization of the right to adequate food. However, while the past 15 years have seen important progress taking place in those institutions, as briefly illustrated previously, recent years have seen strong momentum for the more active inclusion of other important stakeholders, such as parliamentarians and academia, which is very

much in line with the multistakeholder nature of the Right to Food Guidelines.

Parliamentary alliances against hunger and malnutrition

Parliamentarians have a crucial role to play in making sure that people are able to feed themselves in dignity given their legislative, budgetary and oversight roles, combined with their critical influence within their constituencies. To capitalize on their important role and promote cooperation and coordination amongst members of parliament, parliamentary alliances have been and are being established, including at regional level. In Latin America and the Caribbean, with the support of the Hunger-Free Latin America and Caribbean Initiative, the **Parliamentary Front Against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean** (PFH-LAC) was established in 2009 and has greatly contributed to regional and national legislative and policy processes conducive to the realization of the right to adequate food, including the promotion of over 50 legislative initiatives resulting in the adoption of 23 laws and three constitutional amendments aimed at achieving zero hunger.⁸⁰ In Africa, the **Pan African Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition** (PAP-FSN) was created to foster an enabling environment to achieve SDG 2, to ensure that the right to adequate food is featured at the highest level of the regional legislative and political agendas, now driving the process of developing and adopting a Regional Model Law on Food and Nutrition Security. In addition, steps were taken at subregional level by establishing parliamentary alliances, such as the creation of the Eastern African Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (EAPA FSN) in 2019. In Europe, the **European Parliamentary Alliance on the Fight against Hunger** is a cross-party and cross-committee group with more than 30 parliamentarians from different nationalities, political affiliations and parliamentary committees, that provides a space for policy dialogue and awareness raising on the right to adequate food for all, and on the eradication of hunger, food insecurity

and malnutrition. Meanwhile, cutting across regions, the **Parliamentary Network for Food Security in Africa and the Arab World** was established comprising countries from Africa and the Arab World on the initiative of the Association of Senate, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECCA). Besides cooperation at regional level, the impact has had wide ramifications at national level with dozens of countries establishing national parliamentary alliances to achieve zero hunger. The momentum was evident during the first **Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition** that took place in Madrid in 2018. With over 200 parliamentarians from around 80 countries, the Madrid Summit concluded with the adoption of the Madrid Declaration which sets out a number of commitments to “achieve zero hunger and ensure the right to adequate food for all”.⁸¹

Information for the right to adequate food

Although it always had an important role in the generation of data to feed legislative and policy processes, academia and research institutions play an increased role in informing actions that contribute to the realization of the right to adequate food. A recent trend has seen the establishment of observatories on the right to adequate food. One prime example is the **Right to Food Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean**, (ODA-ALC), established in 2011, and composed of over 70 institutions from 17 countries in the region, represented by different schools and study centers. Members of the Observatory have extensive experience in methodology, action, analysis, monitoring and assessment of public policy and legislation, as well as advising parliamentary commissions in the context of partnerships with the Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament. Meanwhile, the **Spanish Observatory on the Right to Food**, (ODA-E), created in 2018, and comprising 30 academic institutions and social organizations, aims to promote experience-sharing and dialogue among academic institutions of Ibero-America, parliaments, civil society and

social organizations. Moreover, the media also has a pivotal role to play in explaining the situation and promoting efforts towards the realization of the right to adequate food as the Guidelines emphasize the importance of “promot[ing] freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of information, freedom of the

BOX 9. THE WORLD BANANA FORUM

The World Banana Forum (WBF) brings together key players from the world banana economy to promote sustainable production and trade. WBF deals with global economic, social and environmental concerns, such as gender inequality, poor working conditions and unsustainable production and processing practices. The strength of the WBF stems from its broad and extensive membership, which includes governments, global retailers, international civil society organizations, trade unions, consumer associations, farmers, research institutions and intergovernmental organizations. FAO launched this initiative as a means for the progressive realization of the right to food and serves as its Secretariat.

WBF engages in constructive dialogue, and actively supports initiatives with potential to strengthen the sustainability of the banana industry. For example, in 2014 the WBF created the Banana Occupational Health and Safety Initiative (BOHESI) out of the shared belief by Members of the need to improve the working conditions of plantation workers and their communities. BOHESI was launched as a pilot project in Ecuador and Cameroon and has received unprecedented support by public and private sector actors at local, national and international level. BOHESI developed a manual on occupational health and safety, which serves as the basis for capacity development activities. The manual has been endorsed by the Ecuadorian Government, and countries as distant as Costa Rica and Ghana have already expressed their desire to be involved in this initiative.

press and freedom of assembly and association” to meet the objectives.⁸² To this end, **Togo** has taken an innovative step by creating a National Network of Journalists on the Right to Food that should contribute to complementing national efforts to “provide information to individuals to strengthen their ability to participate in food-related policy decisions that may affect them, and to challenge decisions that threaten their rights”.⁸³

A key takeaway from the multitude of experiences and processes introduced above, is that no single context or reality is required in order to take decisive actions towards implementing the Right to Food Guidelines and progressively realizing the right to adequate food. That said, an essential common denominator has been the strong will from the actors involved, from the authorities to the communities, to ensure that concrete and decisive steps were taken to guarantee that gradually everyone, without any discrimination and with a focus on vulnerable and

marginalized groups, is able to feed themselves in dignity. In sum, the pivotal factors that were present in processes that led to some of the cases presented above included:

- ▶ Strong political commitment and the allocation of public resources;
- ▶ Promotion of policy coherence through the use of a human rights-based approach;
- ▶ Commitment to meaningful participation, strong partnerships and multistakeholder dialogue;
- ▶ An emphasis on the most vulnerable populations, communities, groups and individuals, including women, youth and indigenous peoples;
- ▶ Dedicated attention to raising awareness, access to information and education; and
- ▶ An undertaking of evidence-based analysis, information and monitoring to increase accountability. ■



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Section 3

Challenges to address as we reach 2030

Progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its goals will be hampered by a ‘business as usual’ approach. Despite valuable efforts and the important advances that have taken place over the years, including those described previously, more progress and alternative pathways are needed to bridge the gap and meet the stated objectives of the SDGs, including Zero Hunger. Since their adoption, the Right to Food Guidelines have helped address national and global challenges by focusing on the most vulnerable sections of society, bridging the gap in the often segmented development culture, and promoting a set of human rights principles across the board which, as shown

in previous sections, have proved to be catalysts to better, sounder and more effective policy-making. For 15 years, this global instrument has been calling for more and better actions to ensure “a peaceful, stable and enabling economic, social, political and cultural environment in which individuals can feed themselves and their families in freedom and dignity”⁸⁴ in a sustainable manner.

More specifically, one of the main messages of this global instrument is that a substantial paradigm shift is required to redefine *how* policy-making must impact the achievement of the SDGs and beyond, in

order to truly resonate with the root causes of hunger and malnutrition. Such causes are often found at grassroots level, in local realities, in the hands of local leaders, in the most vulnerable communities, where access to adequate food is often not guaranteed. The Right to Food Guidelines have been providing guidance on how to effectively tackle vulnerabilities at the core of food insecurity and malnutrition. Vulnerable people must be a priority in each action taken to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, no matter which SDGs are driving the national policy agenda. It is safe to say that a people-centered approach, focusing on the most vulnerable is key to ensuring more sustainable solutions. The Right to Food Guidelines must be translated into more effective action in order to help address global challenges that are redefining vulnerability to include a much wider and complex group of people in every region of the world.

Today, in a complex world that is revealing a deteriorating food security and nutrition outlook, the Right to Food Guidelines are more relevant than ever. No matter the global challenges, the Guidelines remind us of the need to break silos, to look at policy-making through a human rights- and people-centered approach from design through to implementation and monitoring. They further stress the importance to prioritize not just the needs of the most vulnerable but also their entitlements, which should be appropriately met through the responsibility and accountability of duty-bearers.

Pressing challenges and the Right to Food Guidelines

While the specific challenges that will be discussed forthwith have evolved over time, they were already relevant 15 years ago when the Guidelines were initially discussed, negotiated and adopted. Given the proximity of those challenges with provisions set forth in the Guidelines, the experience garnered over the years in implementing comprehensive legislative and policy measures, some of which were presented previously, can help to inform collective actions in

years to come to meet the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. These challenges call for specific actions to change from ‘business as usual’ and focus actions on those who have been left behind for decades. Among the pressing challenges discussed are sustainable food systems, access to resources and markets as well as challenges from climate change and protracted crises.

Sustainable food systems and access to resources and markets

What has become central to global discussions on sustainability and food security and nutrition in recent years is transforming or adapting current food systems to meet pressing challenges and ensure that everybody can enjoy their right to adequate food today and in years to come. These discussions demonstrate the complexity and multifaceted dynamics which make up these systems and how they work together or in isolation, which could seriously hamper the availability of adequate food. This is why a new approach to food systems is required; one that encompasses not only the issue of access to food or its procurement, but also the need to have healthy diets which are socially, economically and culturally acceptable, adequate for everyone and sustainable for present and future generations. While food systems are broad and malleable concepts, some key elements include healthy diets, food loss and waste, marketing and nutrition information, decent employment and social protection, to name a few.

A decade and a half ago, these same issues were also in the minds of actors when they drafted the Right to Food Guidelines. Hence, they are found throughout the Guidelines with, for example, Guideline 8E specifically discussing sustainability, while Guideline 10 is essential to healthy diets and nutrition information, Guideline 8A to decent employment and Guidelines 13 and 14 are relevant to social protection. Meanwhile, Guideline 3.3 specifically calls on States to adopt national human-rights based strategies that could “address all aspects of the food system, including the production, processing, distribution, marketing and consumption

of safe food [...] access to resources and to markets” while addressing “the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, as well as special situations such as natural disasters and emergencies”.⁸⁵

More specifically, access to and control over resources is a determinant factor for many people’s livelihoods, especially the rural poor and indigenous peoples, and a prime contributor to the realization of the right to adequate food. Furthermore, projections to 2050 suggest the emergence of growing scarcities of natural resources for agriculture. Intensified competition for these resources could lead to their overexploitation and unsustainable use, degrading the environment and creating a destructive cycle whereby resource degradation leads to ever increasing competition for the remaining available resources, triggering further degradation, and hence diminishing access to adequate food. Given the crucial nexus between the issues, this is a central and crosscutting component of the Right to Food Guidelines, as exemplified by the different provisions found in Guideline 8. What is more, focus is put on “the specific access problems of women and vulnerable, marginalized and traditionally disadvantaged groups”⁸⁶ while special attention is recommended for “pastoralists and indigenous people and their relation to natural resources”.⁸⁷ Meanwhile, Guideline 4 articulates several provisions pertaining to markets, including emphasis on ensuring non-discrimination and the access of disadvantaged individuals and communities to markets, in addition to being mindful of the environment, public goods and vulnerable groups that may require special attention and measures.

Climate change and protracted crises

Climate change has profound consequences on people’s livelihoods and their ability to enjoy their right to adequate food, in addition to other basic human rights. Around 2.5 billion people depend on agriculture for their livelihoods and unless comprehensive, concerted and decisive actions are taken to address the multisectoral effects and transform food systems in a sustainable manner,

IN FOCUS VULNERABILITIES LINKED TO UNSUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

Today, nobody is excluded from becoming vulnerable and unable to meet their basic human right to adequate food. Vulnerabilities in need of special attention are affecting individuals and groups in societies who were previously not part of traditionally-intended vulnerable groups. For instance, various sections of today’s societies are affected by nutrition issues of the new millennium such as obesity and overweight. These, in turn, highlight the need for policies to reduce rising levels of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which directly affect the sustainability of food systems and nutrition. As said earlier, the element of adequacy carries with it an essential cultural aspect, as well as qualitative and quantitative aspects, and aspects of sustainability, affordability and accessibility. Obesity and overweight, NCDs, and the right to food are strongly connected as the latter applies not only to undernutrition, but to overnutrition as well. The nutritional content of adequate diets to food systems is crucial and outlines State obligations to address these issues in order to realize the right to food, together with other interlinked human rights, such as the right to health, social security, decent work and education. The Right to Food Guidelines remind us that the responsibilities of States extend from merely providing a basic minimum of food to preventing malnutrition and hunger, utilizing the maximum level of available resources. In order to protect, respect and fulfil the right to food, States today must address structural issues in food production, processing, and marketing to address overweight and obesity as well. The most vulnerable are no longer a least or developing country issue, they are also one of the major issues affecting developed countries.

it will further exacerbate the pressure on food production, affecting food availability, hindering access to adequate food and disrupting the livelihoods of communities, especially the most vulnerable, and bring us further away from the realization of the right to adequate food.

IN FOCUS VULNERABILITIES LINKED TO ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND MARKETS

Small-scale fisheries represent a diverse and dynamic subsector, often characterized by seasonal migration. Out of the 116 million people living in developing countries and directly dependent on commercial capture fisheries value chains for their livelihoods, almost 32 million fishers work in the small-scale fisheries subsector, and 47 percent of the total workforce is made up of women, which in developing countries equates to 56 million jobs.⁸⁸ The Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) recognize that fishing and associated pre- and post-harvest activities are more than merely economic production activities. For many fisherfolk and their communities, they are a way of life characterized by a unique cultural richness comprising traditions and norms anchored in local communities and supporting social cohesion. Despite their importance, many small-scale fishing communities continue to be marginalized, and their contribution to food security and nutrition, poverty eradication, equitable development, natural resources and market access and utilization – and even more generally the sustainability of food systems – is not fully realized.

While the interdependence of climate change and the realization of the right to adequate food has been part of key global instruments to differing extents for decades, it has rarely been tackled jointly. The Right to Food Guidelines present a vehicle through which joint actions can be undertaken and have included this pressing challenge in different parts of the document, such as in Guidelines 3 and 16, where it is a particular area of attention for national strategies.

Meanwhile, protracted crises due to conflict, in addition to those stemming from natural hazards and climate change, can devastate people's livelihoods, seriously hampering the possibility of people to enjoy their right to adequate food while also considerably contributing to hunger, poverty and forced migration. This is particularly true in rural areas where most

IN FOCUS VULNERABILITIES LINKED TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Because of natural hazards, such as low rainfall, millions of vulnerable communities, including pastoralists, are faced with water shortages for their cattle and the pasture becoming parched and brown leading to the deteriorating condition of livestock. The natural pasture is usually of poor quality and is not nutritious. This creates insurmountable barriers to improving their livelihoods, escaping poverty and realizing their right to food. The contribution of pastoralism to food security and the realization of the right to adequate food is significant, as it is practiced in over 75 percent of countries.⁸⁹ In East Africa, for instance, it offers direct support to an estimated 20 million people, accounting for 90 percent of the meat produced in the region and 80 percent of the total milk produced in Ethiopia. As such, pastoralism represents important added value for local and national economies. And yet, globally pastoralists face many challenges. Overcoming these barriers requires effective social protection systems, which in more than 100 countries, have become an important tool for reducing hunger. It is estimated that they have prevented 150 million people worldwide from falling into extreme poverty. Social protection alone will not solve the issue. By keeping a specific vulnerable group in mind, solutions can be tailored to address their specific needs, for instance through access to natural resources and markets, nomadic-style tailored services such as education and healthcare, and generally the recognition of their rights.

livelihoods rely on agriculture and on access to and ownership of natural resources. The Right to Food Guidelines deal with a number of key aspects pertaining to protracted crises and conflicts, including the dedicated Guideline 15 and the specific provision on international food aid in paragraph 13 of Section III, as well as by reaffirming the obligations of States during such events, covered primarily in Guideline 16. Following the guidance offered by this international

IN FOCUS VULNERABILITIES LINKED TO PROTRACTED CRISES: INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLES

Internal displacement often causes people to remain dependent on humanitarian assistance for years, because it fails to be translated into longer-term and sustainable development action with the final objective of realizing the fundamental right to an adequate standard of living. Internally displaced peoples (IDPs) are not just an issue of protracted crises action, their plight is primarily a development and political challenge connecting a number of human rights considerations that are reflected in many SDGs such as poverty, hunger and malnutrition, health, education, gender, water, sanitation, decent work, inequalities, climate action, peace, justice and strong institutions, to name a few. Tens of millions of IDPs live below poverty lines and they should not have to wait until a conflict is fully resolved or all impacts of a disaster have ceased before they can begin rebuilding their lives in accordance with the fundamental standards of human rights and dignity.⁹⁰

instrument, the right to food has informed part of strategic frameworks for food assistance and food crises prevention in international agreements, policies and standards that have been adopted in the last decade. The Food Assistance Convention and the revised Charter for Food Crisis Prevention and Management in the Sahel and West Africa, both of 2012, are two good examples.

Addressing the challenges and synergies: from the Right to Food Guidelines to the SDGs

It is now well understood that achieving the SDGs requires a coordinated set of actions on a number of fronts, including coherent policies and programmes in line with national priorities and greater collaboration across different sectors and

DID YOU KNOW?

Right to Food Guideline 19 asks States to “fulfil those measures, actions, and commitments on the international dimension [...] in support of the implementation of the [Right to Food] Voluntary Guidelines”. In Section III, the Right to Food Guidelines also stress that “national development efforts should be supported by an enabling international environment, the international community and the UN system, including FAO, as well as other relevant agencies and bodies according to their mandates, [...] to take action in supporting national development efforts for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security”. The essential role of international cooperation is well recognized and established in Article 56 of the Charter of the United Nations stating that “all Members pledge themselves to take joint and separate action in cooperation with the Organization for the achievement of the purposes set forth in Article 55”. Article 55 is relevant to the Right to Food Guidelines because it highlights the international community’s commitment to promote:

- ▶ Higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development;
- ▶ Solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems;
- ▶ International cultural and educational cooperation; and
- ▶ Universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

This is also an important factor in the SDGs, which call for all countries to take responsibility and to work together to provide adequate financing and cooperation to meet the targets by 2030.

stakeholders, such as CSOs, consumers and the private sector. The Right to Food Guidelines have been providing direct guidance to States to make more efforts and link the dots of the development paradigm, so often dealt with in isolation, which now, more than ever, must be looked at in a holistic

BOX 10. INTERNATIONAL MEASURES, ACTIONS AND COMMITMENTS

Over the years, a number of development cooperation policies have shown strong commitment and support to the progressive realization of the right to food, including the following:¹

The Government of **Brazil** has been heavily involved in South–South triangular cooperation conducive to the realization of the right to adequate food in recent years. Based on its own national experience consolidated over many decades, the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) led efforts towards establishing “sustainable School Feeding Programmes within the context of the human right to food” in dozens of countries across the globe. These efforts are built around several axes, including strong coordination between government sectors, the strengthening of institutional capacities, the creation of conducive legal frameworks as well as the “[g]uarantee of the availability of school feeding as a human, socio-political and state right”.²

The Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) is a programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of **Denmark** focused on providing humanitarian aid and development assistance, in line with the Government’s strategy for development cooperation and national priorities for development assistance. Through DANIDA, the Danish Government concentrates its development assistance on four strategic priority areas: human rights and democracy, green growth, social progress, and stability and protection. DANIDA is committed to employing a human rights-based approach to development, and to be a strong, trustworthy, and active partner dedicated to the world’s poorest.³

The **European Union** (EU) has a firm political commitment to integrate human rights principles into EU operational activities for development and has made an explicit commitment to implement a rights-based approach to development cooperation, encompassing all human rights. In particular, in the new Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for the period 2015–2019, the EU reiterates this commitment with specific actions to integrate a rights-based approach into all EU development instruments and activities.⁴ Finally, engagement for the protection of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) has been reinforced in the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) strategy 2014–2020, which specifically refers to the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to an adequate standard of living and core labour standards.⁵

Finland has an explicit international human rights policy, the goal of which is the eradication of discrimination and increased openness and inclusion. Its policy targets are ESCR specifically, including the right to food, and it strives to bring ESCRs to an equal footing with civil and political rights (CPR). In the sphere of international cooperation, Finland considers it important to promote the enforcement of ESCR and, in particular, to ensure the achievement of non-discrimination so that the disadvantaged have equal opportunities to enjoy education, health services and employment. Finland wishes to see the greatest possible number of states ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which specifies that communications may be submitted by or on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals. Finally, the Finnish Government includes a Food Security Pilot in its policy which aims to strengthen human rights through an interplay of policies.⁶

France’s development cooperation and assistance policy provides leverage for its diplomacy working to promote human rights. The 2019 interministerial strategy on Human Rights and Development aims to formalize the framework for French action to support the respect, protection and achievement of human rights through cooperation. In line with the new European Consensus on Development, it also aims to integrate the human rights-based approach in all development cooperation actions conducted by France.⁷

The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of **Germany** (GIZ) pledges full support to people in its partner countries in articulating and asserting their rights and interests. Its field work on human rights is diverse and targets specific vulnerable groups.⁸ For **GIZ**, the 2030 Agenda is the overarching framework that guides its work. GIZ advises countries on implementing their goals, which they set within the context of the 2030 Agenda. The 2030 Agenda is an integral part of the planning, implementation and monitoring of all new projects at GIZ. Five principles have been drawn from this framework, including: leaving no-one behind, accountability and universality. The corporate values of GIZ include advocating respect for human rights, equal opportunities and integrity.⁹

Over the past few years in the ambit of South–South and triangular cooperation, the Mexican Government has been active in concretely supporting global and regional efforts towards advancing the realization of

BOX 10. CONTINUED

the right to adequate food. Through the Mexican Agency for International Cooperation (AMEXCID),¹⁰ **Mexico** has been a driving force behind the Hunger-Free Mesoamerica programme that puts forth “innovative development solutions in order to guarantee decent living conditions for the most vulnerable population” through a human rights-based approach that strives to achieve SDG 2.¹¹ What is more, the country has been instrumental in supporting and increasing the role and impact of parliamentarians in the fight against hunger, notably through its support to regional efforts of Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger and Malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean.¹²

Over the past few years, the Government of the **Netherlands**’ development cooperation programme has been organized around themes in which Dutch resources, knowledge and expertise can make a difference, including food security, water, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and security and the rule of law, women’s rights and gender equality, and climate and private sector development. In addition, the Netherlands is working to strengthen civil society in developing countries and also offer humanitarian aid. The guiding principles for Dutch development cooperation policy are the SDGs, while its goals seek to: prevent conflicts and instability, reduce poverty and social inequality, and promote sustainable growth and climate action worldwide.¹³

Norway’s development cooperation takes an integrated approach to its foreign and development policy. It is designed to promote economic development, democratization, implementation of human rights, good governance and measures that can lift people out of poverty for good. Priority is given to education, humanitarian assistance, health and vaccination, private sector development, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and human rights. In June 2019, the Government launched a new action

plan – Food, People and the Environment – to promote sustainable food systems in the context of Norwegian foreign and development policy for the period 2019–2023.¹⁴

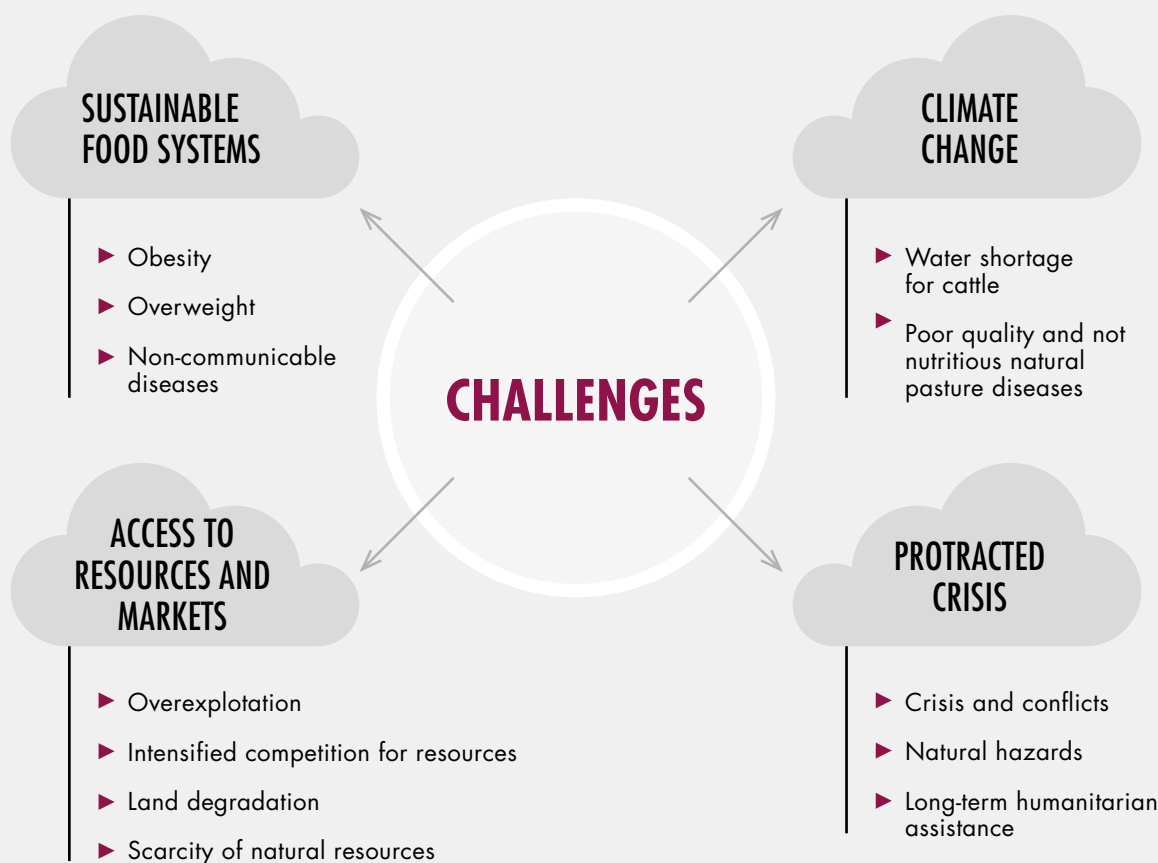
The **Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation** (AECID) was created to further development conceived as a fundamental human right, with the fight against poverty as part of the process for building this right. The Agency focuses on three cross-cutting elements: gender perspective, environmental quality, and respect for cultural diversity, in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015. AECID’s vision is defined in its 2014–2017 Strategic Plan, based on the Agency’s contribution to: achieving development results favouring poverty reduction, social cohesion, and equal rights for people in partner countries; providing access to and protection of the essential rights of populations who fall victim to humanitarian crises; building a society aware of the importance of development.¹⁵

The **Swedish Government** has adopted a new strategy for human rights, democracy and the rule of law that will apply to Swedish development cooperation between 2018 and 2022. The overall objective of the strategy is to contribute to secure, just and inclusive democratic societies that protect and respect the equal rights of all. The strategy covers the funds allocated in the appropriation directions of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Folke Bernadotte Academy for each budget year.¹⁶ Specifically, Sida is also governed by other thematic focused-strategies, which support the realization of the right to food by targeting gender equality and women’s and girls’ rights, sustainable social development, environmental sustainability, sustainable climate and oceans, and sustainable use of natural resources, and sustainable peace.¹⁷

manner. While the above-mentioned challenges were already foreseen in the Right to Food Guidelines when adopted in 2004, their complexity and urgency have taken major leaps in the years since for a variety of reasons, as has the amount of information and recommendations on ways to address each individual challenge. While the SDGs may not always recognize some of the connections between those challenges,

and at times may promote disconnected approaches to tackle them, they all are key facets that the SDGs strive to address. This is crucial considering that the whole world needs to engage and address them since it is impacted by these challenges without discrimination. Let us look at how the Right to Food Guidelines can further support the achievements of the SDGs.

INFOGRAPHIC 4. GLOBAL CHALLENGES HAMPERING THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD



The intrinsic relationship between SDG 1 and SDG 2 was already foreseen in Guideline 2.4 when it mentions “States should consider adopting a holistic and comprehensive approach to hunger and poverty reduction”.⁹¹ The Right to Food Guidelines, and the experience garnered over the years with their implementation, can offer an essential contribution to the broader efforts to achieve the SDGs. To this end, two of the overarching principles of the Right to Food Guidelines – non-discrimination and empowerment – could be of value to meet the goals of the 2030 Agenda, with examples such as **SDG Target 10.2** calling on actors to “empower and promote the social, economic and political

inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”,⁹² **SDG Target 10.3** aims to “[e]nsure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard”⁹³ as well as SDG Target 16.B stressing the need to “[p]romote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development”.⁹⁴

An important element to bear in mind when considering the SDGs and its targets is that the SDGs, based on United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1, are guided by the purposes

and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including full respect for international law.⁹⁵ The UN Charter, and specifically articles 55 and 56, is referred to by the Right to Food Guidelines as a basis for their existence.⁹⁶ The SDGs are also grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights treaties, the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome, and with the exception of the latter, all formed the basis for the Right to Food Guidelines.⁹⁷ Guiding the processes of the 2030 Agenda must be the principles of equality and non-discrimination, participation and transparency, human dignity and empowerment, and accountability and the rule of law, which are all human rights principles found across the Right to Food Guidelines. Lastly, the 2030 Agenda encourages States to address the structural barriers that exacerbate and perpetuate discrimination, exclusion and marginalization by focusing on those left behind, reminiscent of the focus on marginalized and vulnerable groups of the Right to Food Guidelines.

Sustainable food systems and access to resources and markets

As previously seen, sustainable food systems encompass many important elements for the realization of the right to adequate food and those elements are found across different SDGs and their related targets. Closely related to climate action, as seen in Guideline 8E on sustainability, **SDG Target 2.4** calls to “ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality”.⁹⁸

Meanwhile, **SDG 12** has many specific targets ranging from sustainable consumption and production to the sustainable management and use of natural resources. More specifically, **SDG Target 12.3** strives to “halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply

chains, including post-harvest losses”.⁹⁹ Also important for sustainable diets and lifestyles, **SDG Target 12.8** aims to “ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature”,¹⁰⁰ hereby recalling key elements of Guidelines 10 and 11.

DID YOU KNOW?

Food loss and waste (FLW) amounts to a third of the global food production and represents around 8–10 percent of the total GHG emissions from food systems.¹⁰¹ FLW reduction could significantly contribute to efforts to realize the right to adequate food while diminishing the impact of the food systems on the environment.¹⁰² The current zero draft of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition includes food loss and waste¹⁰³ as a key policy area for intervention to improve the sustainability of food systems and nutrition. It is important to recall that the zero draft builds on the HLPE Report No.8¹⁰⁴ and the subsequent Policy Recommendations¹⁰⁵ on Food Losses and Waste in the Context of Sustainable Food Systems endorsed by CFS41, recommending all concerned stakeholders to:

- ▶ Improve data collection and knowledge sharing on FLW;
- ▶ Develop effective strategies to reduce FLW;
- ▶ Take effective steps to reduce FLW; and
- ▶ Improve coordination of policies, strategies, and actions to reduce FLW.

As previously seen in Guideline 8, decent employment is a central motor behind the ability of people to enjoy their right to adequate food. Not coincidentally, the right to decent employment is closely linked to the right to adequate food in international instruments. Indeed, **SDG Target 8.5** calls on actors to “achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value”,¹⁰⁶ which would go a long way in achieving zero hunger.

Given the importance of education to enact positive changes to address key global challenges – including

the right to adequate food as emphasized notably by the dedicated Guideline 11 – **SDG Target 4.7** seeks to “ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality”.¹⁰⁷

SDG Target 1.3 calls on States to implement “social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable”, thus building on the numerous elements in Guideline 14.¹⁰⁸

As for access to resources, Guideline 8.1 stipulates that “States should facilitate sustainable, non-discriminatory and secure access and utilization of resources consistent with their national law and with international law and protect the assets that are important for people’s livelihoods. States should respect and protect the rights of individuals with respect to resources such as land, water, forests, fisheries and livestock without any discrimination”.¹⁰⁹

SDG Target 2.3 stresses the importance of this to achieve zero hunger when it states the need to “double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolk, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment”.¹¹⁰

Lastly, **SDG Target 1.4** further reinforces **SDG Target 2.3** by adding another fundamental layer for the realization of the right to adequate food and insisting on the need to “ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services”.¹¹¹

Climate change and protracted crises

An overarching objective of the Right to Food Guidelines is to create an enabling environment to

empower people to enjoy their right to adequate food in dignity. One of its components resides in strengthening the resilience of communities and peoples. Considering the devastating impact climate change can have on the realization of the right to adequate food, **SDG Target 1.5** proves particularly relevant and evokes the need to “build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters”.¹¹² Additionally, **SDG Target 13.2** calls for States to “integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning”,¹¹³ thereby offering a strong basis for coherent actions with the implementation of the Right to Food Guidelines, whereby Guideline 3.1 calls for the adoption of “a national human rights-based strategy [...] as part of an overarching national development strategy”, a strategy that according to Guideline 3.9 should be “transparent, inclusive and comprehensive, cut[ting] across national policies, programmes and projects”.¹¹⁴

Moreover, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement are presented as two central documents in achieving the targets of SDG 13. The UNFCCC has as its objective the “stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level [...] achieved within a timeframe sufficient [...] to ensure that food production is not threatened”¹¹⁵ while the Paris Agreement recognizes “the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse effects of climate change”.¹¹⁶ Additionally, the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture, emphasizes the key role of agriculture and food security in the international climate change agenda, and was adopted at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP23) in 2017 and foresees joint work on six areas including the socio-economic and food security dimensions of climate change in the agricultural sector.¹¹⁷ There are numerous provisions found across the Right to Food Guidelines that are also relevant. Indeed, Guideline 8.13 reads: “States

should consider specific national policies, legal instruments and supporting mechanisms to protect ecological sustainability and the carrying capacity of ecosystems to ensure the possibility for increased, sustainable food production for present and future generations, prevent water pollution, protect the fertility of the soil, and promote the sustainable management of fisheries and forestry”.¹¹⁸

Closely related to the impact of climate change are protracted crises, when a significant part of the population is acutely vulnerable to death, disease and disruption of livelihoods over a prolonged period of time. While each crisis differs, recurrent causes include both human-made factors and natural hazards and they notably lead to the violation of the right to adequate food, the breakdown of livelihoods and food systems and the weakening of governance and institutional capacities.¹¹⁹ It goes without saying that protracted crises have major impacts on the attainment of the SDGs, particularly SDGs 1 and 2.

Working towards better coherence

In addition to the interrelated nature of the SDGs and their foundation, notably in key international human rights instruments, several avenues exist to ensure better and greater coherence between legal and policy processes that aim to address critical challenges for the realization of the right to adequate food, challenges pertaining to sustainable food

systems, access to resources, climate change and protracted crises. To this end, the Right to Food Guidelines and the experience gained over the past 15 years of their implementation can offer a valuable link and framework for decisive actions that lead to meeting the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, including that mentioned by **SDG Target 17.14** which specifically calls for actors to “[e]nhance policy coherence for sustainable development”.¹²⁰

What is more, as reiterated during the recent International Symposium on the Future of Food: “[i]nstitutional arrangements need to be strengthened at international and national levels to ensure greater coherence of policies and actions that promote good governance at all levels” with specific measures that “include: i) coherent national policies with explicit nutrition targets; ii) improved institutional arrangements for effective multisectoral cooperation; iii) engagement with partners to create and sustain an inclusive enabling environment for improved nutrition; iv) facilitation of effective implementation at all levels; v) concerted efforts to encourage effective design, implementation and monitoring of actions at various levels; vi) regular and systematic public assessment of progress to enhance accountability and effectiveness and to improve resource use; and vii) support to national governments to enable national authorities to establish and implement their own national policies and strategies”.¹²¹ ■



Takeaways with an eye on the future

When the Right to Food Guidelines were drafted 15 years ago, many of the pressing issues for the realization of the right to adequate food were not too distant from those faced today. It is therefore unsurprising that so many elements from this globally adopted document have been integrated into the global agenda set forth in the SDGs. Over the past decade and a half, countries across the globe – with different histories and realities – have put into practice components of the Guidelines and adopted innovative and important measures to address some of the underlying causes that stand in the way of fully realizing the right to adequate food. While an array of legislative, policy and institutional developments have been highlighted in the previous

pages, by no means do they represent the length and complexity of actions that have been taken by actors to promote the right to food around the world. Still, and as firmly entrenched in the 2030 Agenda, much more remains to be done if the world is to meet and overcome some of the most pressing challenges of the twenty-first century, notably, widespread hunger and malnutrition. With a wealth of experience acquired over the past 15 years and given its inherent relevance to addressing some of the most fundamental and pressing components of the current global framework for action, the Right to Food Guidelines can contribute positively and decisively to those efforts in the years to come. With this in mind, this section includes some **takeaway policy messages**

from 15 years of implementation of the Right to Food Guidelines that should **help guide actions in the years to come**:

Evidence-based analysis, information and monitoring for increased accountability to progressively realize the right to adequate food and achieve the SDGs

Policy measures and legislative actions are fundamental in achieving the SDGs, however, basing them on evidence, tracking the progress and shortcomings of those measures over time is of prime importance to ensure that those measures are efficient and on track with stated objectives and targets if we are to progressively realize the right to adequate food of all. Indicators, targets and benchmarks that are monitored over time through adequate and efficient mechanisms are vital to address gaps and better adjust actions towards achieving the SDGs.

Knowledge and access to information will empower rights-holders to enjoy the whole extent of the right to adequately feed themselves in dignity

Global efforts have to move from *freedom from hunger* to the need to address the whole concept of the right to adequate food, especially the adequacy component. Knowledge and access to information are of vital importance to empower people in knowing the extent of their rights and being able to make healthy choices. In order to guarantee the right to adequate food, it is important to include not only access to nutritious and sufficient or healthy food, but adequate food from a number of standpoints and dimensions that include sustainability, and cultural, social, economic, climatic and ecological factors.

There is a need for multistakeholder efforts counting on all partners to fully implement the 2030 Agenda

While bold and decisive efforts by traditional actors involved in policy processes on the right to adequate food are warranted to meet the objectives of the SDGs, an increased role ought to be played by other important actors within food systems, such

as civil society, consumer associations, the media and the private sector. Evolving global challenges to sustainable food systems require the active involvement and positive contribution of such actors who play important roles in shaping and influencing policy processes that impact efforts to achieve the SDGs. Dedicated spaces for multistakeholder dialogues can facilitate engagement and cooperation between a limited group of actors to address specific issues.

The Right to Food Guidelines promote policy coherence based on experience to achieve the SDGs

Overcoming the main challenges to realizing the right to adequate food requires coherence between the actions of different actors. As seen throughout the document, the Right to Food Guidelines is a pioneer in laying out fundamental features of sustainable food systems that ought to be addressed in order to ensure that people can feed themselves in dignity and in a sustainable manner. The world now must meet the challenges set by the SDGs, whose indicators and targets recall numerous components of the Right to Food Guidelines. The wealth of experiences acquired over the past 15 years – difficult challenges encountered and important progress made – should contribute to guiding efforts towards consolidating synergies and rendering common actions more efficient in eradicating hunger and malnutrition.

Vulnerabilities are evolving in a changing world and efforts need to meet and address those changes

When analyzing causes that hinder the realization of the right to adequate food – with a focus on vulnerable groups that include women, children and indigenous peoples – it is crucial to also understand the flexible and changeable nature of vulnerabilities over time. Over the years, new realities and challenges have rendered additional and different groups vulnerable to having their right to adequate food violated and hampered. When issues of grandiose proportions for food systems, such as the effects of climate change, rapid urbanization and the rising trend of overweight and obesity, compound

existing vulnerabilities and structural weaknesses, the ability to efficiently respond to the needs of the most vulnerable depends on its adaptability to those changing circumstances.

The right to development is a common vector to achieve an adequate standard of living for all

The realization of the right to adequate food requires bold actions in several areas. As with human rights that are interrelated and interdependent, many underlying issues need to be addressed in a unified

way if we are to make tangible and concrete progress towards achieving the SDGs. Overarching many of those areas and issues, the right to development should garner special attention to unite efforts to achieve an adequate standard of living for everyone as an “inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized”.¹²²

INFOGRAPHIC 5. IMPLEMENTING THE RIGHT TO FOOD GUIDELINES INTO POLICY PRACTICE

1

ENABLING DRIVERS

- ▶ Linking planning and budget
- ▶ Ensuring multistakeholders participation and knowledge
- ▶ Use evidence for decision-making
- ▶ Define clear duty –bearers mandates

2

HELP

- ▶ Foster policy coherence for food security and nutrition
- ▶ Address dynamic vulnerabilities

3

TO ACHIEVE

- ▶ Right to food
- ▶ Right to development
- ▶ Right to an adequate standard of living



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Notes

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BOXES

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3 The lack of recognition of existence jeopardizes de facto the realization of the rest of human rights.

4 Customary forest titles.

5

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10

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examples with an explicit reference to economic, social and cultural rights including the right to food.

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Fifteen years implementing the Right to Food Guidelines

Reviewing progress to achieve
the 2030 Agenda

Since 2004, the Right to Food Guidelines have introduced an approach that has influenced the global agenda to eradicate hunger and malnutrition and is relevant to today's global efforts towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, grounded in human rights and hence recalling the importance of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

This publication highlights efforts of a number of countries, organizations, groups, at the global, regional and national level, in taking legislative actions, designing policies and strategies, setting up accountable institutions and bodies, to respect, protect and fulfil this human right. While looking at good implementation practices from the past fifteen years, this review offers concrete examples of how this global normative instrument can still make a substantial and decisive contribution to today's global challenges and offers six takeaway policy messages to guide our future actions.