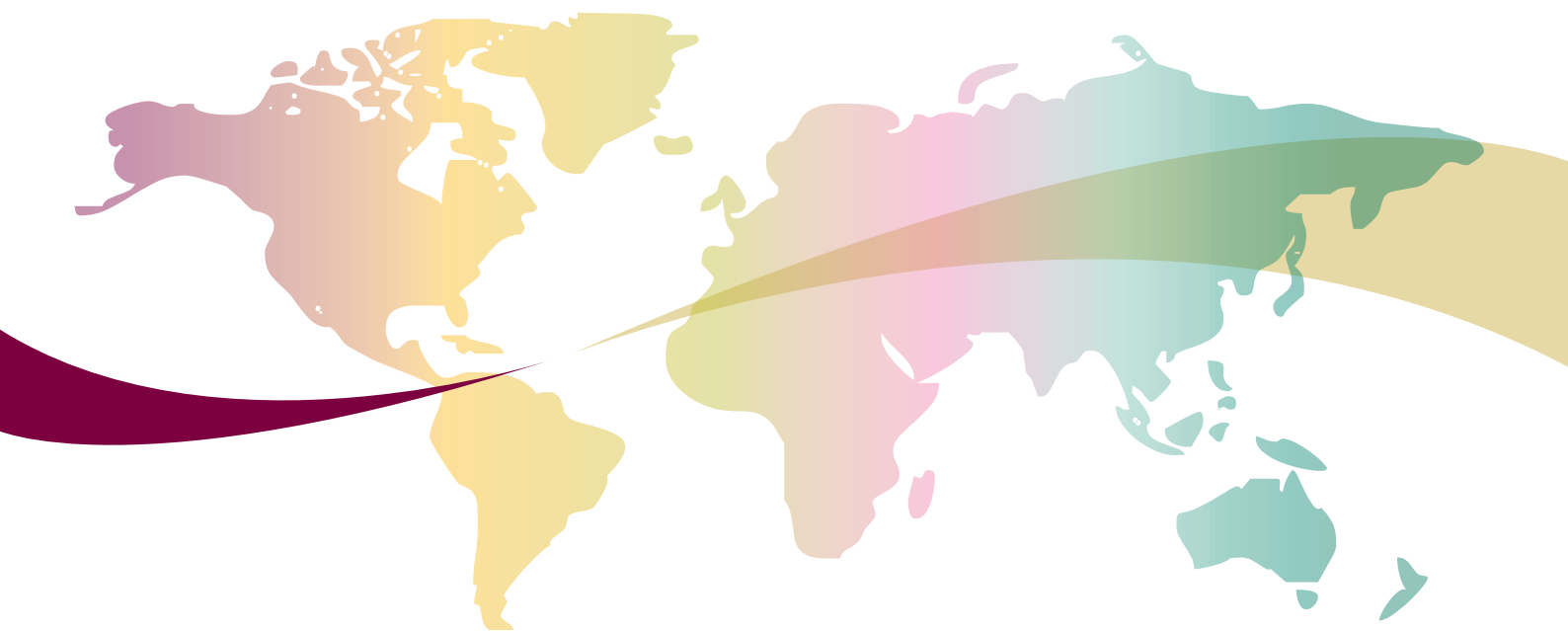


RIGHT TO FOOD IN ACTION

Examples of how FAO Member Countries Make it Happen



THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD
EL DERECHO A UNA ALIMENTACIÓN ADECUADA
LE DROIT À UNE ALIMENTATION ADÉQUATE
право на достаточное питание



适当的食权
حق الإنسان في الغذاء الكافي



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The *Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security* – the Right to Food Guidelines for short, adopted by FAO Council in 2004, contain practical recommendations to States for the implementation of the right to food. Many countries are taking important steps for the realization of this right. Since the FAO Right to Food Unit was founded in 2006, it has been helping governments meet their right to food obligations and has worked to highlight right to food principles in FAO's policy assistance.

Right to food efforts are as diverse as the problems related to hunger and malnutrition. They may include, among others, assessing specific nutrition vulnerability, strengthening local governance, or improving policy planning at the district level. Right to food work regularly deals with incorporating international law into constitutions or national legislation. It often concerns safeguarding food security in a specific policy area. It always involves raising awareness among duty-bearers (governments) and rights-holders (individuals) about their rights and obligations. Capacity development is key to all these activities.

The following country progress reports give an overview of the types of right to food activities with which FAO is involved.

BRAZIL

Brazil is a good example of a country that has taken comprehensive action to realize the right to food. Efforts to support the right to food began with the First National Conference on Food and Nutrition in 1986, which was part of the drafting process for the new constitution.

Brazil's 1988 constitution and subsequent amendment (2003) incorporates some of the world's most progressive constitutional right to food references. The creation of the National Council of Food and Nutritional Security (CONSEA) was a major breakthrough. It reports directly to the president and its membership is made up of two-thirds civil society and one-third government, along with multilateral observers. The body advises on policies and guidelines to fulfil the right to food and has set up a surveillance system that tracks hunger and malnutrition. The Human Rights Secretariat has set up a commission that monitors violations of the right to food. Even the State Prosecutor's Office (Ministério Público), which is independent of all three branches of government and has the power to propose legally binding actions to remedy human rights violations, has taken specific right to food action.

Since 2002, when the Brazilian government invited international review of its food security strategy revisions, FAO and the Right to Food Unit have been active in the promotion of the right to adequate food and nutrition in the context of food security. The Right to Food Unit has been funding the NGO *Brazilian Action for Nutrition and Human Rights* (ABRANDH) to raise community awareness, work with the government to improve legislation and legal institutions, and support the work of the national Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Water and Rural Lands, an independent, civil society backed human rights defender.

The Ministry of Social Development and the Fight Against Hunger (MDS), together with strong NGO support, created a right to food online course for 3 000 Government officials, CONSEA members and public prosecutors.

The combination of progressive government policy and an unflagging civil society sector has ensured broad acceptance of the legitimacy of the right to food in Brazil.

In 2003, the government initiated its *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger) programme, which encompasses 31 inter-ministerial, anti-hunger projects, among which the *bolsa família* (family grant), a monthly cash grant that currently benefits 12 million poor families. A school feeding programme provides meals to 37 million children. Increasingly, right to food principles are being applied.

In 2006, Brazil's Food Security Framework Law, initiated by CONSEA, was approved by government. It stipulates that an inter-ministerial coordination chamber be established and ensures that CONSEA and the National Food and Nutrition security conference – the country's main hunger eradication coordination entities - will become permanent parts of Brazil's government structure.

Civil society remains a key partner. *Citizenship Action*, a network that addresses hunger, poverty and social exclusion, has created more than 7 000 local committees that work on projects ranging from urban vegetable gardens to the support of agrarian reform. More than 1 000 civil society groups drafted reports for the 30th session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2003.

BHUTAN

Recent developments in Bhutan include democratization, WTO accession and a move to orient its economic policies towards the well-being of the individual. Therefore, "happiness" is the country's overarching development paradigm. Gross National Happiness includes promotion of equitable and sustainable socio-economic development, preservation and promotion of cultural values, conservation of the natural environment, and establishment of good governance. The Right to Food Unit is helping Bhutan apply these principles to the food security policy of the country.

BOLIVIA

When the Bolivian Government decided to modify their existing Food Security Council, it embraced Brazil's CONSEA model. FAO's Right to Food Unit provides support to the Ministry of Health, which assumed the coordination role of the modified council.

The Food Security Councils at municipal level, called COMAN, play a vital role in *Desnutrición Cero*, Bolivia's zero hunger and malnutrition programme, in the country's 52 poorest municipalities. The Right to Food Unit will support Bolivia's food security strategy by training COMAN councilors to facilitate the establishment of sound food security plans for their level and the formulation of recommendations for the national *Desnutrición Cero* programme.



ECUADOR

Ecuador is starting a process for a new constitution and has requested the support of FAO for the preparation of a document on the Right to Adequate Food to be presented to the constitution assembly. The government of Ecuador has also prepared a national plan for social development and has asked FAO to provide technical assistance for issues related to rural development and the right to food. A national training and creation of awareness workshop has been conducted.

GUATEMALA

In 2005, Guatemala adopted a legal framework that regulates the *National Information System on Food and Nutrition Security (SINSAN)* and declares food a human right for all the people of Guatemala. The main obstacle facing this important step is the lack of knowledge among government officials and civil society about the right to food. FAO is thus supporting the implementation of the right to adequate food in Guatemala by building capacity at all levels.

INDIA

In 2001, the right to food advanced greatly in India when a civil liberties NGO filed a lawsuit in Rajasthan to force the country to use food stocks to prevent hunger during a widespread drought. While India's Supreme Court considers a final judgment on the case, it has issued a number of significant interim orders, which have turned various government programmes into legally binding entitlements for poor and vulnerable persons. The orders spurred the implementation of India's mid-day school meal programme, mandatory for all children in government and government-assisted primary schools. The largest school meal programme in the world, it serves more than 50 million cooked meals daily. The Supreme Court has appointed special commissioners to monitor the implementation of its interim orders. A vibrant civil society, particularly the network of the Right to Food Campaign India, continues to monitor the implementation of the Supreme Court orders, to scrutinize public action against hunger and malnutrition and to raise awareness of food as a human right.

FAO is working with human rights and anti-hunger experts from government, civil society and academia. Staff of the Supreme Court's Right to Food Commission has contributed to FAO's Right to Food Curriculum. Members of the Right to Food Campaign India, made up of several thousand NGOs and community groups, have lectured at FAO, most recently during the 2006 session of the Committee on World Food Security and advised the Right to Food Unit on matters of policy and advocacy. In December 2007, a South Asian right to food event will be held on 10 December on the occasion of Human Rights Day, in India.



MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique's poverty reduction strategy includes food security as a cross-cutting issue. The government is committed to considering food security from a rights perspective. Therefore, the *Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition* (SETSAN) has been charged with gathering information, building capacity and advising the government on any policy matters pertaining to food security and the right to food.

FAO's Right to Food Unit supported the Secretariat in revising the Food Security Strategy (FSS). Members of *Brazilian Action for Nutrition and Human Rights* (ABRANDH) also collaborated by sharing their lessons learnt. The strategy was submitted to Parliament following a seminar organized by SETSAN in June 2007 and is expected to be finalized by the end of 2007.

Every year, the Government and international donors use the Action Plan for Poverty Reduction (PARPA) Monitoring Matrix to evaluate progress made towards poverty reduction goals. One of the indicators monitored is the number of chronically malnourished children below age five; Mozambique's goal is to reduce the percentage of low-weight children from 24 percent to 18 percent by 2009. The matrix also evaluates progress made towards elaborating and approving framework law on the right to food, targeted for 2007. In addition, the human rights league and the Ministry of Justice are working on the framework legislation. ROSA – a food sovereignty network – has launched a campaign to raise awareness and urge the Government to ratify the ICESCR.

NEPAL

After the restoration of freedom and civil and political rights in 2006, the Nepalese are eager to tackle economic, social and cultural rights. The human right to food is thus in great demand in Nepal. Both as a legal right and as a political goal it benefits from the momentum created by the return of democracy in 2006, the peace and reconciliation-process and the introduction of food-related provisions in the new draft constitution.

FAO has begun working to raise awareness of the right to food among media, parliamentarians and officials of national and sub-national government. In April 2007, FAO participated as an observer in a fact-finding mission on the right to food; the multi-stakeholder platform of international organizations as well as international and national NGOs was led by Rights and Democracy (Canada).

FAO has been supporting the elaboration of framework law on food security in Nicaragua and has reviewed and commented on different draft versions of the bill, which was submitted to Parliament in 2007. To further strengthen this process, the Right to Food Unit will convene a Regional Workshop on Right to Food Framework of Law in late 2007, which will also help countries in the region share legislative experiences.

NICARAGUA

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PERU

The *Andean Commission of Jurists* (CAJ) and the Multiparty Commission of the Peruvian Parliament on the MDGs, have formulated a draft framework of law on the right to food, with the support of FAO. The draft law was presented to Congress in 2007. National training and creation of awareness workshops and meetings have been carried out for parliamentarians, members of the UN country team and civil society.

PHILIPPINES

In the Philippines people refer to the right to food as the *Justice of Eating*. The name does not change the principles and the level of commitment of those working to realize this human right.

FAO's Right to Food Unit is working with *ESCR-net Asia*, an NGO advocating for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights to include human rights in the Philippines hunger mitigation programme. The *ESCR-net Asia* team is actively engaged in expanding the number of stakeholders working for the right to food by improving the knowledge base of both the government and civil society. It is now creating toolkits for policy makers. These kits will include a how-to manual along with educational CD and video programmes.

SENEGAL

In March 2007, Senegal hosted a regional workshop on nutrition indicators in the analysis of food security in West Africa. On that occasion, West African government representatives agreed on the following recommendation: "to integrate the right to food into strategies against malnutrition and food insecurity, taking into account the Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, adopted by FAO Member countries in 2004". In the light of such an undertaking, Senegal has requested FAO's Right to Food Unit assistance in introducing right to food principles into its National Food Security Strategy, which is currently being developed by the National Council on Food Security.

SIERRA LEONE

Post-conflict Sierra Leone has put an increasing emphasis on food security and the right to food. Indeed, in 2002, the president of the country committed his second term to the realization of the right to food. FAO provided support to the creation of a Right to Food Secretariat and a Right to Food Ministerial Policy Coordination Committee. In 2004 and 2005, the Right to Food Secretariat successfully intervened on a number of occasions for the inclusion of food security as the central component of Sierra Leone's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, with specific monitoring and other responsibilities attributed to the Right to Food Secretariat.

Information about activities relevant to realizing the right to food was gathered from all stakeholders, collated, analysed and disseminated. Data on the actual realization of the right to food was collected from line ministries and key informants, and used as guidance for policies and programmes. Initial communication efforts were aimed at raising awareness of rights-based approaches and the right to food, diversifying diets and bridging the gap between central authorities and District Food Security Committees.



SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa has one of the most progressive constitutions with regard to economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to food. The constitution also entrenched a human rights commission with the mandate to monitor all human rights, investigate complaints of violations and seek redress to them and to develop awareness of human rights among the people. Efforts have also been made to develop a legislative framework for the right to food.

FAO is cooperating with a range of national actors in the production of a human rights based textbook on community nutrition for university students. This textbook will be the first of its kind and will also be useful to other countries in the region, which, until now, have had to rely on textbooks on community nutrition from other regions.



TANZANIA / ZANZIBAR

When Zanzibar requested FAO to assist with the formulation of a food security and nutrition policy and programme, FAO responded, under the FAO-Netherlands Partnership Programme (FNPP) by supporting technically and financially a team of government staff from various ministries for this purpose. The team was tasked not only with drafting a new policy, and simultaneously formulate a programme necessary to implement the policy.

Zanzibar's 2006 Food and Nutrition Situation Analysis provides basic inputs that enabled policy and programme planners to target insecure and vulnerable groups. Risk-reduction policies and programmes are being tailored to meet specific local needs. FAO's Right to Food Unit, in collaboration with FNPP, worked with the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar to mainstream human rights principles and right to adequate food standards in the Zanzibar Food Security and Nutrition Policy and the Zanzibar Food Security and Nutrition Programme, both of which have been formulated through a consultative process involving many stakeholders at different levels.

UGANDA

Uganda's 2003 Food and Nutrition Policy explicitly recognizes the right to food and instructs that it should be implemented using a human rights-based approach. It does this thanks to a national seminar on the right to food, supported by FAO amongst others.

FAO's Right to Food Unit is supporting the revision of a draft Food and Nutrition Bill, in order for it to have operational content on the right to food, obligations of different government bodies and adequate coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the right to food. FAO will hold a Regional Workshop on Right to Food Framework of Law in Uganda in late 2007, which will also strengthen impetus for the Food and Nutrition Bill. At the same time, capacity development will be strengthened and support provided to human rights based implementation of the Food and Nutrition Policy at district level.



Make it happen.



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