

GUIDE TO CONDUCTING A RIGHT TO FOOD ASSESSMENT





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Preface

*Every human being has the right to adequate food. Reaffirmed by Heads of State and Government at the World Food Summits in 1996 and 2002, the right to adequate food is also enshrined in several international human rights instruments. This right has been accepted as a binding obligation by the 159 States that have ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. For some decades, divergence and uncertainty reigned with regards to the concrete steps to be taken to make this right a reality for all, until in 2004 FAO Council unanimously adopted the “Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security” (from here on called the **Right to Food Guidelines**).*

*These **Guidelines** represent the first attempt by governments to interpret an economic, social and cultural right. They provide practical guidance and advice to states for the establishment of priorities and the implementation of measures to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the right to adequate food at national level.*

*The **Right to Food Guidelines** address all states whether rich or poor, regardless of their food security situation. While the Guidelines constitute a considerable advancement in the promotion of the right to food, the technical capacity to integrate a human-rights approach to traditional food security policies is still underdeveloped. This is mainly due to the inherent complexity of the right to food concept which requires legal, economic policy, social and institutional action in line with the human rights principles of transparency, accountability, participation, non-discrimination and the rule of law. In order to support governments in their efforts to implement the **Right to Food Guidelines**, the Right to Food Unit at FAO has developed a series of reference guides including the present guide on **How to Conduct a Right to Food Assessment**.*

A profound assessment of a legal, policy and institutional framework is the starting point for a country to implement the right to food. Such an assessment usually starts with the identification of vulnerable groups and the reasons for their deprivation. An analysis of the country's laws, policies and institutions helps to understand whether a government is on track in responding to the root causes of hunger and what measures need to be taken to address possible gaps. A distinctive feature of right to food assessment is its focus on assessing duty bearers' accountability to right holders.

The present Guide aims to be highly practical. No recipes are presented, rather, it provides methods and tools to undertake a right to adequate food assessment. The material contained in the Guide draws on lessons learned from FAO-supported country case studies on the right to adequate food. A preliminary version was used and validated in a number of countries. These experiences also enriched the present Guide.

*The **Right to Food Guidelines** are still a very recent practical tool and implementation can only be viewed in its initial stages. The more the **Guidelines** and the support*

material developed by the Right to Food Unit are used, the more we will be able to learn and adapt our material accordingly. We therefore invite readers to kindly share with us their experiences with the use of this tool, as well as any comments and suggestions that will allow us to improve the content, organization or presentation of the Guide. We hope that the Guide will constitute a valuable tool for governments, civil society and other stakeholders in their efforts to progressively realize the right to adequate food.

Barbara Ekwall

*Coordinator,
Right to Food Unit
Agricultural and Development Economics Division*

Acknowledgements

*The development and preparation of this manual on Conducting a Right to Food Assessment consisted of a participatory process that involved a number of collaborators as well as potential in-country users of these volumes. The process began after the adoption of the **Right to Food Guidelines** in November 2004. The lead author was Frank Mischler. A special mention is extended to Dr Uwe Kracht who supervised the preparation of the guide in the initial phase and provided invaluable contributions. Kerstin Mechlem drafted the section on assessment of a legal framework.*

Members of the Right to Food Unit at FAO have made comments and provided important inputs on drafts: Maarten Immink, Barbara Ekwall, Margret Vidar, Mauricio Rosales, Isabella Rae, Dubravka Bojic Bultrini and Lidija Knuth. Other colleagues at FAO also reviewed various drafts, and made suggestions for improvements: Julian Thomas, Marco Knowles, Andreas von Brandt, Thomas Lindemann, Mark Smulders and Eve Crowley; Gabriele Zanolli undertook the lay-out work.

The Right to Food Unit decided to put a first complete draft of the guide into the public domain and encourage a wide audience to use it. Through its global right to food network, FAO kept track of the use and users of the guide. In addition, the Right to Food Unit used the guide in its country projects in the Philippines, Mozambique and Bhutan. The Unit maintained a close working relationship with the international non-governmental organization Action Aid that has conducted “rapid right to food assessments” in over 40 countries. Their guidance to local groups was based on the Right to Food Unit’s Assessment Guide. The comments of Carmen Lahoz and Enrique de Loma-Ossorio were highly appreciated.

List of acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CONSEA	National Food and Nutrition Security Council (of Brazil)
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFID	Department for International Development (of UK)
ESCR	Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIVIMS	Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Mapping System
FSN	Food Security and Nutrition
GC12	General Comment 12
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIEWS	Global Information and Early Warning System
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGWG	Intergovernmental Working Group
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SCN	Standing Committee on Nutrition
SLA	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
SWOT /SWOC	Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Treaths (or Constraints) Analysis
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAD	Vitamin A deficiency
WFS	World Food Summit
WFS:fyI	World Food Summit: five years later
WDI	World Development Indicators
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

