

# The Right to Adequate Food

## Promoting accountability of food security actions to the people most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition



**Event:** *organized by the Permanent Representation of Norway and the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM), and co-hosted by the Permanent Representations of Brazil, South Africa and Switzerland.*

**Time and venue:** *Tuesday 24 January 2017. Light breakfast 9.00. Seminar 9.30-13.00. In the German Room, FAO headquarter.*

**Participants:** *The event is open to all permanent UN missions in Rome, participants and observers of the CFS, and staff of the Rome-based agencies.*

### Introduction

The event will recall, 20 years after the World Food Summit and 50 Years after the adoption of the two main UN Human Rights treaties (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) the fundamental role of the Right to Adequate Food in the context of the universality, indivisibility, interrelatedness and interdependence of all human rights. It will also look into how accountability to affected populations operates in practice and why this is important for the right to adequate food of the people most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition.

The event will address the following questions:

- What is the Role of the Right to Adequate Food in the CFS, 20 years after the WFS and 50 Years after the adoption of the ICESCR and ICCPR?
- Why are human rights, particularly the right to adequate food, essential for the fight against hunger and malnutrition, and how has this approach contributed to food security and nutrition?
- How does accountability to affected populations operate in practice and why is it important for the right to adequate food of the people most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition?

### Background

The right to food and accountability to affected populations are interdependent and interrelated, but are not very often discussed together under one umbrella. With this seminar, we wish to bridge the two terms and see how they are linked together.

### The right to food

In 2016, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of adoption. This constitutes an opportunity to reflect about the fundamental role of the Right to Adequate Food in the context of the universality, indivisibility, interrelatedness and interdependence of all human rights.

20 years ago, in November 1996, the Heads of State and Government gathered at the World Food Summit (WFS) and agreed on a historical breakthrough for the Right to Adequate Food. The Rome Declaration started with reaffirming this human right, and the WFS Plan of Action established the objective 7.4 on the Right to Adequate Food. In the follow-up to the WFS 1996, the CFS developed the Voluntary Guidelines for the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security (Right to Food Guidelines), adopted in 2004 by the FAO Council.

The Right to Food Guidelines constituted the historical precedent for the inclusive and participatory approach to governance of food security and nutrition which was then installed with the Reform of the CFS in 2009. The mandate to contribute to the progressive realization of the Right to Adequate Food is included in the Vision of the reformed CFS and in several aspects of its Reform Document, and has since informed the CFS negotiation processes and results. The reformed CFS recognized the special importance of the participation of those social groups of rights-holders that have been most affected by hunger and malnutrition, and in the same time are the most important contributors to food security and nutrition worldwide: small-scale food producers, family farmers, fisherfolks, pastoralists, agricultural and food workers, indigenous peoples, landless, women, youth, consumers, and the urban food insecure.

### **Accountability to affected populations**

Promoting Accountability and sharing best practices is one of the key roles of the CFS, outlined in the CFS Reform Document. It includes an innovative monitoring mechanism which is currently and incrementally being developed, focusing on the major strategic decision of CFS, such as the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT).

Accountability has also been an important guiding principle for RBAs in the field of humanitarian work. Humanitarian agencies are accountable to the women, men, boys and girls whose lives they aim to improve, and often place this responsibility at the core of their humanitarian policy. As a matter of human rights and meaningful programming, Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) is defined as an active commitment by humanitarian actors and organizations to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to and being held to account by the people they seek to assist.

By being more accountable to affected populations – by increasing their participation and feedback in program identification, design, delivery and lesson learning – agencies achieve programs of higher quality, with greater and more sustainable impact. It increases the space for communities to shape their own recovery and for the agencies to better deliver against their commitments to stakeholders, including the people they assist and the resource partners who make assistance possible. And ultimately, it should contribute to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.