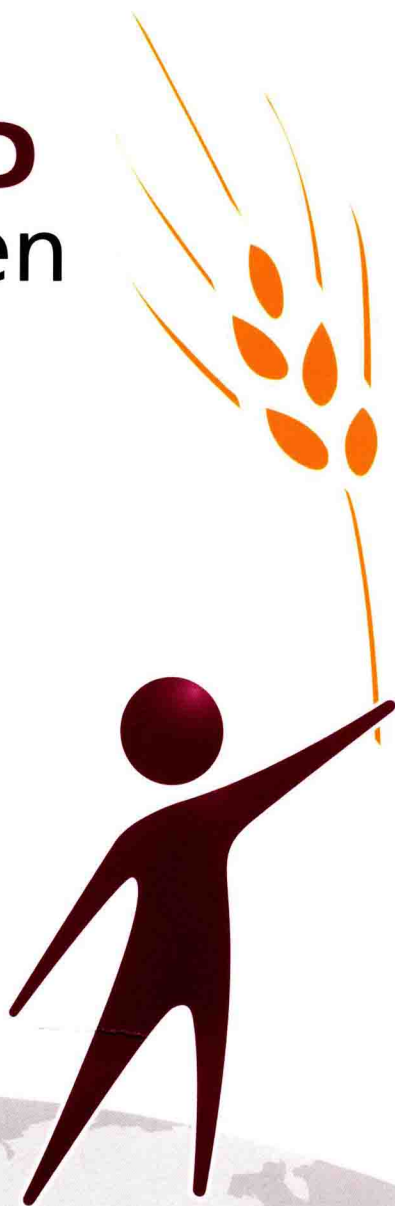


# RIGHT TO FOOD

## Making it Happen

Progress and Lessons Learned  
through Implementation



THE  
RIGHT  
TO  
FOOD



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Progress and Lessons Learned  
through Implementation



The Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the United Nations

2011



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## Foreword

*Approximately six 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). The consensus found at FAO Council in 2004 on these Guidelines represents a milestone in the development of the right to food, reflecting FAO members' vision of a world without hunger, made possible by linking food security instruments to human rights and governance tools tackling the root causes of hunger.*

*A high number of people persistently suffer from hunger and recurring food crises. In this context, the right to food is an essential element to confront circumstances which have affected so disproportionately the most vulnerable people and deprived them of both access to and the means to procure food. The time has come to bridge the gap between the unacceptable reality of a growing number of starving people and the vision of a world free from hunger.*

*An approach based on the right to food and good governance can bring about an essential contribution towards bridging this gap. The right to food does not replace existing development efforts towards hunger reduction: it rather brings a new dimension and complements traditional approaches to fight food insecurity. It does this by providing a legal framework and stressing the notions of rights of individuals and obligations of States. It also ensures the establishment of mechanisms to increase accountability of all – citizenry and government as well as development agencies and other stakeholders. By focusing on the most vulnerable, the right to food ensures that targeted action will benefit the hungry without discrimination. By promoting transparency, participation and accountability, it improves the efficiency of measures taken by governments and stakeholders. Finally, by empowering the poor, it ensures that they have a voice, are involved in decision-making and can claim their rights.*

*In the past few years, FAO has successfully supported several initiatives at country level and has gained considerable experience in promoting the right to food worldwide. This knowledge was brought together during the Right to Food Forum held at FAO headquarters in Rome in October 2008. The Forum provided a platform for over 400 representatives from FAO member countries, civil society organizations, international organizations and academia to share practical experiences and lessons learned from these pilot activities; discuss the progress, constraints and achievements reached so far; and identify new ways to promote the realization of the right to food as a human right. The resulting exchanges contributed to creating a momentum for a strengthened commitment towards promoting the right to food and principles of good governance, particularly at country level.*

*Recent initiatives have consolidated the right to food both as an objective and as a tool to achieve food security for all. As an objective, the right to food provides an overarching framework that guides efforts at international, national, regional and sub-national levels to address food insecurity and its structural root causes. As a tool, applying human rights principles in policy processes creates a better chance for increased efficiency, effectiveness and impact of policy and operational measures to achieve food security for all. The right to food implies a change of perspective: the hungry cease to be a problem; they become both part of the solution and actors of their own development.*

*Right to Food – Making it Happen is the first publication that brings together the practical experiences and lessons learned during the years 2006 to 2009 with the implementation of the*



right to food at country level, based on the Right to Food Guidelines. It looks at how the right to food has been integrated into policy planning, strategy formulation, programme design and legislative processes throughout Latin America, Africa and Asia. It also highlights successes to be applauded and challenges to be met in five countries that took concrete steps to focus on the right to food when they identified the hungry, conducted assessments, developed strategies, adopted legislation, strengthened coordination and set up monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

These pages shed light on right to food achievements during the period 2006-2009, as well as progress in advancing its legal, political and institutional dimensions. Such progress paves the way to a more all-encompassing adoption of the right to food and good governance principles at the global and national levels, and also in multilateral agencies dealing with food and agriculture like FAO, guiding their work in the fight against hunger and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goal 1.

May the experiences, conclusions and recommendations in this publication serve as an inspiration for further action and an increased commitment towards a human right that is here to stay.

**Jacques Diouf**

Director-General

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

## Acknowledgements

*This volume represents four years of intensive work by FAO and partners throughout the world in assisting countries in the formulation and implementation of legislation, strategies, policies and programmes recommended in 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) approved by FAO Council in 2004. During this time, several right to food initiatives were successfully undertaken and considerable experience gained in advancing the right to food worldwide.*

*Many people have contributed to the contents of this document, which is a collection of valuable lessons learned and recommendations reflecting the past years of implementation activities based on the different experiences at country level and assisted by the Guidelines.*

*FAO is proud to acknowledge the groundbreaking work of a very dedicated team of staff and consultants, led by Barbara Ekwall: Mauricio Rosales, Margret Vidar, Andreas von Brandt, Frank Mischler, Isabella Rae, Julian Thomas, Maartin Immink, Dubravka Bojic Bultrini, Lidija Knuth, Luisa Cruz, Rebecca Kik and Simona Smeraldi. Gabriele Zanolli, Daniela Verona and Tomaso Lezzi were responsible for the layout and presentation of the many quality publications issued during the four-year period and the present publication. The very efficient and affable administrative and secretarial assistance provided by Patricia Taylor, Federico Patimo, Tiziana Tarricone, Sonia Santangelo, and Sophia Mann was also instrumental in ensuring an excellent series of outputs.*

*The important contributions of our colleagues and partner institutions, as well as the actors in the right to food scene who have provided technical support throughout our important mandate, are gratefully acknowledged. Our thanks go to the many FAO departments that contributed to our endeavours. Their inputs to the different right to food publications, as well as their collaboration with regard to integrating the right to food into FAO's work were of paramount importance in the realization of this work.*

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*An important milestone in the generation of information based on concrete country experiences was the Right to Food Forum 2008, held in Rome. FAO is grateful to all those who took part and,*



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*The detailed case studies contained in Part THREE indicate how selected countries have included the right to food in their assessment, strategy development, legislation and coordination procedures, in keeping with FAO's 'seven-step process'. These studies are based on papers developed for the Forum. The authors of these papers are acknowledged as follows: Elisabetta Recine and Frank Mischler for Brazil; Mauricio Rosales and Luis Enrique Monterosso for Guatemala; Aruna Sharma and Margret Vidar for India; Lazaro dos Santos and Cecilia Luna for Mozambique; and Peter Rukundo for Uganda.*

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>ABRANDH</b>	Ação Brasileira para Nutrição e Direitos Humanos (Brazilian Action for Nutrition and Human Rights)
<b>AJEHR</b>	African Journal on Ethics and Human Rights
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>APL</b>	Above poverty line (India)
<b>BPL</b>	Below poverty line (India)
<b>CESCR</b>	UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>CICSAN</b>	Centro de Información y Coordinación de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional (Food Security and Nutrition Information and Coordination Centre – Guatemala)
<b>CIIDH</b>	Centro Internacional de Investigación en Derechos Humanos (International Centre for Human Rights Research)
<b>CONAN</b>	Consejo Nacional de Alimentación y Nutrición (National Council for Food and Nutrition Security – Bolivia)
<b>CONSAN</b>	Conselho Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional (National Council for Food and Nutrition Security – Mozambique)
<b>CONASAN</b>	Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional (National Food and Nutrition Security Council – Guatemala)
<b>CONASSAN</b>	Comisión Nacional de Soberanía y Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional (National Commission for Food and Nutrition Security and Sovereignty)
<b>CONSEA</b>	Conselho Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional (National Council on Food and Nutrition Security – Brazil)
<b>COMAN</b>	Consejo Municipal de Alimentación y Nutrición (Municipal Council for Food and Nutrition – Bolivia)
<b>COPREDEH</b>	Comisión Presidencial Coordinadora de la Política del Ejecutivo en Materia de Derechos Humanos (Presidential Commission on Human Rights – Guatemala)
<b>CPI</b>	Consumer price index
<b>CPR</b>	Civil and political rights
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organizations
<b>DDPR</b>	Department of Disaster Preparedness and Refugees (Uganda)
<b>DES</b>	Dietary energy supply
<b>ECA</b>	Essential Commodities Act (India)
<b>ECLAC/CEPAL</b>	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe)

<b>ESAN</b>	Estratégia de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional (Food Security and Nutrition Strategy – Mozambique)
<b>ESCR</b>	Economic, social, and cultural rights
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>FIAN</b>	FoodFirst Information and Action Network
<b>FSN</b>	Food security and nutrition
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>GIA</b>	Grupo de Instituciones de Apoyo (Institutional Support Group – Guatemala)
<b>GIISAN</b>	Grupo Inter-Institucional de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional (Inter-Institutional Group for Food and Nutritional Security – Guatemala)
<b>HIPC</b>	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
<b>HIV</b>	Human immunodeficiency virus
<b>HSSP</b>	Health Sector Strategic Plans (Uganda)
<b>IBGE</b>	Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics)
<b>IBSA</b>	Indicators, Benchmarks, Scoping and Assessment
<b>ICDS</b>	Integrated Child Development Scheme (India)
<b>ICESCR</b>	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced persons
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>INCOPAS</b>	Instancia de Consulta y Participación Social (Social Participation and Consultation Authority – Guatemala)
<b>INR</b>	Indian Rupees (India)
<b>IPRFD</b>	International Project on the Right to Food in Development
<b>JLOS</b>	Justice Law and Order Sector (Uganda)
<b>LAP</b>	Legal Aid Project (Uganda)
<b>LOSAN</b>	Lei Orgânica de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional (Federal Law on Food and Nutrition Security – Brazil)
<b>LRA</b>	Lords Resistance Army (Uganda)
<b>LRC</b>	Law Reform Commission (Uganda)
<b>MAAIF</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (Uganda)
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MDS</b>	Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger (Brazil)
<b>MPFED</b>	Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development (Uganda)



<b>MOH</b>	Ministry of Health (Uganda)
<b>MTCS</b>	Medium Term Competitiveness Strategy (Uganda)
<b>NAADS</b>	National Agricultural Advisory Services (Uganda)
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>NHRC</b>	National Human Rights Commission (India)
<b>NREGA</b>	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (India)
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>PANTHER</b>	Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination, Transparency, Human Dignity, Empowerment and Rule of Law
<b>PARPA</b>	Plano de Acção para a Redução da Pobreza Absoluta (Plan of Action for a Reduction in Absolute Poverty – Mozambique)
<b>PDS</b>	Public Distribution System (India)
<b>PEAP</b>	Poverty Eradication Action Plan (Uganda)
<b>PMA</b>	Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture (Uganda)
<b>PPP</b>	Private Public Partnership (Uganda)
<b>PROCADA</b>	Proyecto de Promoción y Capacitación para la Implementación Progresiva del Derecho a la Alimentación en Guatemala (Promotion and Training Project for the Progressive Realization of the Right to Food in Guatemala)
<b>PRSP</b>	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
<b>PUCL</b>	People's Union for Civil Liberties (Rajasthan – India)
<b>ROSA</b>	Rede de Organizações para a Soberania Alimentar (Network of Food Sovereignty Organizations – Mozambique)
<b>SESAN</b>	Secretaría de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional (Secretariat for Food and Nutrition Security – Guatemala)
<b>SETSAN</b>	Secretaria Técnica de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional (Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition – Mozambique)
<b>SINASAN</b>	Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional (National Food and Nutrition Security System – Guatemala)
<b>SINASSAN</b>	Sistema Nacional de Soberanía y Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional (National System for Food and Nutrition Security and Sovereignty)
<b>SISAN</b>	Sistema Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional (National Food and Nutrition Security System – Brazil)
<b>UBOS</b>	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
<b>UDHS</b>	Uganda Demographic and Health Survey
<b>UEM</b>	Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (Eduardo Mondlane University – Mozambique)

<b>UFNC</b>	Uganda Food and Nutrition Council
<b>UFNP</b>	Uganda Food and Nutrition Policy
<b>UFNSIP</b>	Uganda Food and Nutrition Strategy and Investment Plan
<b>UHRC</b>	Uganda Human Rights Commission
<b>ULS</b>	Uganda Law Society
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNBS</b>	Uganda National Bureau of Standards
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>USAID</b>	US Agency for International Development
<b>VAT</b>	Value Added Tax
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization



## Introduction

The right to food is an integral part of a vision of a world without hunger, where every child, woman and man can feed himself or herself in dignity. It is a human right formally recognized by the great majority of States. While there is consensus about the vision, States have been slow in putting this human right into practice. And yet, the right to food is far from being a slogan or an academic theory of development. It is about concrete actions and practical solutions. These cover several domains and, in addition to governments, involve key actors ranging from individuals to non-governmental organizations, academia, media, UN human rights institutions, and the private sector.

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 FAO Council in 2004, a number of countries, associations, individuals and organizations embarked on putting the right to food into practice through advocacy, policy making, legislation, monitoring, assessment and the strengthening of institutions. These insights, experiences and lessons learned were presented and discussed at the Right to Food Forum held at FAO from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2008. The case studies from five different countries were discussed in more detail on that occasion.

The publication *Right to Food – Making it Happen* is a summary of three days of exchange on different issues related to country level implementation of the right to food that took place at FAO's Right to Food Forum, including a more in-depth discussion on five countries. It is an effort to share real and practical experiences in a human rights-based approach to combat food insecurity with a particular focus on one fundamental human right – the right to food – as recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

The relevance of promoting right to food as a strategy to fight hunger, as opposed to simply promoting provision of food and development aid, is clearly reflected in FAO's mandate and strategic objectives. Through its efforts to support the formulation of better policy and strategy options on a global scale, FAO plays a key role on the common agenda. It aims to reduce hunger by creating platforms for sharing technical expertise, strategic policy alternatives, and outcomes of implementation of food security strategies adopted by member nations. The Right to Food Forum represented one of these platforms.

This publication is intended to disseminate the lessons learned from discussions that occurred during the event. The overall theme was right to food as a strategy promoted within a human rights-based approach and implemented throughout development assistance programs. It thus links right to food to the overall objective achieving global food security.

The target audience for this publication are development specialists that provide food security policy advice to member nations; UN and non-governmental agencies promoting human rights; official policymakers and legislators of donor as well as developing countries; non-profit organizations involved in food aid and food assistance; and finally all stakeholders involved in country level projects and programmes with the aim of reducing hunger. The intent of the publication is to show that responding to hunger and food insecurity requires coordination of national food security initiatives and increased policy coherence. One must also stress the

importance of strengthening the actual institutions, mechanisms, partners and sectors that promote or support the right to food.

*Right to Food - Making it Happen* comprises three parts. Part ONE clarifies concepts related to the human right to adequate food, shows how it can strengthen efforts to reduce world hunger, describes implementation steps and FAO's work in this area. Part TWO offers a synthesis of the Right to Food Forum. It reflects the rich deliberations, outputs and lessons learned from panels that dealt with advocacy and training, legislation, targeting and assessment, monitoring, strategy and coordination, supplemented by best practice examples in different countries worldwide. Part THREE provides five country case studies, describing the lessons learned and indicating the way forward to a progressive realization of the right to food in Brazil, Guatemala, Mozambique, India and Uganda. The Appendix to this publication contains the full texts of the Opening speeches and the report by the Forum Rapporteur.



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Part ONE

# BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE RIGHT ON FOOD AS A HUMAN RIGHT

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