



## Human Rights Council

### Tenth Session

#### **Resolution 10/12. The right to food**

*The Human Rights Council,*

*Recalling* all previous General Assembly and Council resolutions on the right to food, in particular Assembly resolution 63/187 of 18 December 2008 and Council resolution 7/14 of 27 March 2008, as well as all resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights in this regard,

*Recalling also* the holding of its seventh special session, at which it analysed the negative impact of the worsening of the world food crisis on the realization of the right to food for all, and that a follow-up to that issue is being carried out,

*Recalling further* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provides that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for her or his health and well-being, including food, the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition and the United Nations Millennium Declaration,

*Recalling* the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in which the fundamental right of every person to be free from hunger is recognized,

*Bearing in mind* the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action and the Declaration of the World Food Summit: five years later, adopted in Rome on 13 June 2002,

*Reaffirming* the concrete recommendations contained in the Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, adopted by the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in November 2004,

*Bearing in mind* paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006,

*Reaffirming* that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, and that they must be treated globally, in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis,

*Reaffirming also* that a peaceful, stable and enabling political, social and economic environment, at both the national and the international levels, is the essential foundation that will enable States to give adequate priority to food security and poverty eradication,

*Reiterating*, as in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the Declaration of the World Food Summit: five years later, that food should not be used as an instrument of political or economic pressure, and reaffirming in this regard the importance of international cooperation and solidarity, as well as the necessity of refraining from unilateral measures that are not in

accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations and that endanger food security,

*Convinced* that each State must adopt a strategy consistent with its resources and capacities to achieve its individual goals in implementing the recommendations contained in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action and, at the same time, cooperate regionally and internationally in order to organize collective solutions to global issues of food security in a world of increasingly interlinked institutions, societies and economies where coordinated efforts and shared responsibilities are essential,

*Recognizing* that the problems of hunger and food insecurity have a global dimension and that there has been insufficient progress made on reducing hunger, and that they could increase dramatically in some regions unless urgent, determined and concerted action is taken, given the anticipated increase in the world population and the stress on natural resources,

*Noting* that environmental degradation, desertification and global climate change are factors contributing to destitution and desperation and have a negative impact on the realization of the right to food, in particular in developing countries,

*Expressing its deep concern* at the number and scale of natural disasters, diseases and pests and their increasing impact in recent years, which have resulted in massive loss of life and livelihood and threatened agricultural production and food security, in particular in developing countries,

*Stressing* the importance of reversing the continuing decline of official development assistance devoted to agriculture, both in real terms and as a share of total official development assistance,

*Welcoming* the recent pledges to increase official development assistance devoted to agriculture, and recalling that the realization of the right to food does not only entail increase in productivity but also a holistic approach that includes a focus on smallholder and traditional farmers and the most vulnerable groups and national and international policies that are conducive to the realization of this right,

1. *Reaffirms* that hunger constitutes an outrage and a violation of human dignity and therefore requires the adoption of urgent measures at the national, regional and international levels for its elimination;
2. *Also reaffirms* the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, so as to be able to fully develop and maintain his or her physical and mental capacities;
3. *Considers it intolerable* that more than 6 million children still die every year from hunger-related illnesses before their fifth birthday, that there are at least 963 million undernourished people in the world and that, while the prevalence of hunger has diminished, the absolute number of undernourished people has been increasing in recent years when, according to a study by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the planet could produce enough food to feed 12 billion people, twice the world's present population;
4. *Expresses its concern* that women and girls are disproportionately affected by hunger, food insecurity and poverty, in part as a result of gender inequality and discrimination,

that in many countries girls are twice as likely as boys to die from malnutrition and preventable childhood diseases, and that it is estimated that almost twice as many women as men suffer from malnutrition;

5. *Encourages* States, in accordance with their relevant obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to take action to address gender inequality and discrimination against women, in particular where it contributes to the malnutrition of women and girls, including measures to ensure the full and equal realization of the right to food and ensuring that women have equal access to resources, including income, land and water, to enable them to feed themselves and their families;

6. *Stresses* the need to guarantee fair and non-discriminatory access to land rights for smallholders, traditional farmers and their organizations, including in particular rural women and vulnerable groups;

7. *Encourages* the Special Rapporteur on the right to food to ensure the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the fulfilment of his mandate, and encourages the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and all other United Nations bodies and mechanisms that address the right to food and food insecurity to integrate and effectively implement a gender perspective and a human rights perspective into their relevant policies, programmes and activities regarding access to food;

8. *Reaffirms* the need to ensure that programmes delivering safe and nutritious food are inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities;

9. *Encourages* all States to take steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the right to food, including steps to promote the conditions for everyone to be free from hunger and, as soon as possible, to enjoy fully the right to food and, where appropriate, to adopt national strategies for the realization of the right to adequate food and to consider establishing appropriate institutional mechanisms, in order to:

(a) Identify, at the earliest stage possible, emerging threats to the right to adequate food, with a view to facing them;

(b) Strengthen the overall national human rights protection system with a view to contributing to the realization of the right to food;

(c) Improve coordination between the different relevant ministries and between national and subnational levels of government;

(d) Improve accountability, with a clear allocation of responsibilities, and the setting of precise time frames for the realization of the dimensions of the right to food that require progressive implementation;

(e) Ensure the adequate participation, particularly of the most food-insecure segments of the population;

(f) Pay specific attention to the need to improve the situation of the most vulnerable segments of society;

10. *Calls upon* States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to fulfil their obligations under article 2, paragraph 1 and article 11, paragraph 2 thereof, in particular with regard to the right to adequate food;

11. *Stresses* that improving access to productive resources and public investment in rural development is essential for eradicating hunger and poverty, in particular in developing countries, including through the promotion of investments in appropriate, small-scale irrigation and water management technologies in order to reduce vulnerability to droughts;

12. *Recognizes* that 80 per cent of hungry people live in rural areas, and 50 per cent are small-scale and traditional farm holders, and that these people are especially vulnerable to food insecurity, given the increasing cost of various inputs and the fall in farm incomes, that access to land, water, seeds and other natural resources is an increasing challenge for poor producers, and that support by States for small farmers, fishing communities and local enterprises is a key element to food security and provision of the right to food;

13. *Stresses* the importance of fighting hunger in rural areas, including through national efforts supported by international partnerships to stop desertification and land degradation and through investments and public policies that are specifically appropriate to the risk of drylands and, in this regard, calls for the full implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa;

14. *Also stresses* its commitments to promote and protect, without discrimination, the economic, social and cultural rights of indigenous peoples, in accordance with international human rights obligations, and taking into account, as appropriate, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and acknowledges that many indigenous organizations and representatives of indigenous communities have expressed in different forums their deep concerns at the obstacles and challenges that they face in the full enjoyment of the right to food, and calls upon States to take special actions to combat the root causes of the disproportionately high level of hunger and malnutrition among indigenous peoples and the continuous discrimination against them;

15. *Requests* all States and private actors, as well as international organizations within their respective mandates, to take fully into account the need to promote the effective realization of the right to food for all, including in the ongoing negotiations in different fields;

16. *Recognizes* the need to strengthen national commitment and international assistance, upon request and in cooperation with affected countries, for a better realization and protection of the right to food and, in particular, to develop national protection mechanisms for people forced to leave their homes and land because of hunger or natural or man-made disasters affecting the enjoyment of the right to food;

17. *Stresses* the need to make efforts to mobilize and optimize the allocation and utilization of technical and financial resources from all sources, including external debt relief for developing countries, and to reinforce national actions to implement sustainable food security policies;

18. *Takes note* of the report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food (A/HRC/10/5), in which he examines how development cooperation and food aid policies could make a contribution to the realization of the right to food everywhere;

19. *Encourages* the Special Rapporteur to continue cooperating with States in order to enhance the contribution of development cooperation and food aid to the realization of the right to food, within existing mechanisms, taking into account the views of all stakeholders;

20. *Stresses* that all States should make every effort to ensure that their international policies of a political and economic nature, including international trade agreements, do not have a negative impact on the right to food in other countries;

21. *Takes note* of the report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food on his mission to the World Trade Organization (A/HRC/10/5/Add.2), and encourages the Special Rapporteur to continue to engage with the World Trade Organization to follow up on the issues of concern identified in his report;

22. *Recalls* the importance of the New York Declaration on Action against Hunger and Poverty, and recommends the continuation of efforts aimed at identifying additional sources of financing for the fight against hunger and poverty;

23. *Recognizes* that the promises made at the World Food Summit in 1996 to halve the number of persons who are undernourished are not being fulfilled, and invites once again all Governments, international financial and development institutions, as well as the relevant United Nations agencies and funds, to give priority to and provide the necessary funding to realize the aim of halving by 2015 the number, or at least the proportion, of people who suffer from hunger, as stated in Millennium Development Goal 1, as well as the right to food, as set out in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

24. *Reaffirms* that integrating food and nutritional support, with the goal that all people at all times will have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life, is part of a comprehensive response to the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other communicable diseases;

25. *Urges* States to give adequate priority in their development strategies and expenditures to the realization of the right to food;

26. *Stresses* the importance of international development cooperation and assistance, in particular in activities related to disaster risk reduction and in emergency situations, such as natural and man-made disasters, diseases and pests, for the realization of the right to food and the achievement of sustainable food security, while recognizing that each country has the primary responsibility for ensuring the implementation of national programmes and strategies in this regard;

27. *Invites* all relevant international organizations, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to promote policies and projects that have a positive impact on the right to food, to ensure that partners respect the right to food in the implementation of common projects, to support strategies of Member States aimed at the fulfilment of the right to food and to avoid any actions that could have a negative impact on the realization of the right to food;

28. *Encourages* the Special Rapporteur on the right to food and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises to cooperate on the subject of the contribution of the private sector to the realization of the right to food, including the importance of ensuring sustainable water resources for human consumption and agriculture;

29. *Recognizes* the negative impact on the full enjoyment of the right to adequate food of insufficient purchasing power and of increased volatility of prices of agricultural commodities on the international markets, particularly on people in developing countries and on net-food importing countries;

30. *Supports* the realization of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur as extended for a period of three years by the Council in its resolution 6/2 of 27 September 2007;

31. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to provide all the necessary human and financial resources for the effective fulfilment of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur;

32. *Welcomes* the work already done by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in promoting the right to adequate food, in particular its general comment No. 12 (1999) on the right to adequate food (article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), in which the Committee affirmed, inter alia, that the right to adequate food is indivisibly linked to the inherent dignity of the human person and is indispensable for the fulfilment of other human rights enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights, and is also inseparable from social justice, requiring the adoption of appropriate economic, environmental and social policies, at both the national and international levels, oriented to the eradication of poverty and the fulfilment of all human rights for all;

33. *Recalls* general comment No. 15 (2002) of the Committee on the right to water (articles 11 and 12 of the Covenant), in which the Committee noted, inter alia, the importance of ensuring sustainable water resources for human consumption and agriculture in the realization of the right to adequate food;

34. *Reaffirms* that the Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security represent a practical tool to promote the realization of the right to food for all, contribute to the achievement of food security and thus provide an additional instrument in the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;

35. *Acknowledges* the work undertaken by the Advisory Committee on the right to food;

36. *Requests* the Advisory Committee to undertake a study on discrimination in the context of the right to food, including identification of good practices of anti-discriminatory policies and strategies, and to report thereon to the Council at its thirteenth session;

37. *Welcomes* the continued cooperation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Advisory Committee and the Special Rapporteur, and encourages them to continue their cooperation in this regard;

38. *Calls upon* all Governments to cooperate with and assist the Special Rapporteur in his/her task to supply all necessary information requested by him/her and to give serious

consideration to responding favourably to the requests of the Special Rapporteur to visit their countries to enable him/her to fulfil his/her mandate more effectively;

39. *Recalls* the requests made by the General Assembly, in its resolution 63/187, that the Special Rapporteur submit to it an interim report at its sixty-fourth session on the implementation of that resolution and to continue his/her work, including by examining the emerging issues with regard to the realization of the right to food within his existing mandate;

40. *Invites* Governments, relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, treaty bodies and civil society actors, including non-governmental organizations, as well as the private sector, to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur in the fulfilment of his/her mandate through, inter alia, the submission of comments and suggestions on ways and means of realizing the right to food;

41. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution to the Council at its thirteenth session;

42. *Decides* to continue consideration of this matter under the same agenda item at its thirteenth session.

*42nd meeting  
26 March 2009*

[Adopted without a vote.]

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