Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES

to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security

Right to food 20TH ANNIVERSARY VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES







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FOREWORD

The 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Right to Food Voluntary Guidelines invites us to reflect and calls us to take action.

These guidelines, adopted by the FAO Council and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in 2004, were groundbreaking in establishing a framework that transformed our approach to food security by recognizing food as a fundamental human right. This foundational shift has been instrumental in shaping subsequent international frameworks, such as the CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems and the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests, which continue to be essential tools in advancing global food security.

Over the past two decades, significant progress has been made in embedding the right to food into national, regional and local frameworks. A number of countries have enshrined the right to food in their constitutions, legal systems and policy approaches, including enhanced social protection programmes, school food and nutrition initiatives, and targeted support for vulnerable communities.

Civil society organizations were also crucial in ensuring that vulnerable populations had a voice in international discussions on the guidelines twenty years ago. Since then, these organizations have supported the implementation of the guidelines, holding governments accountable.

FAO has played a pivotal role over the past two decades in supporting governments, farmers organizations, small businesses, and other partners in building capacities to uphold this right. Our

efforts include providing technical assistance, facilitating knowledge sharing, and fostering dialogue to ensure that the right to food remains central in policy discussions and actions. FAO initiatives, such as promoting farmer field schools, setting food safety and nutrition standards, supporting land tenure security, advancing gender equality in agrifood systems or providing relief to famers to recover their livelihoods after conflict, among others, address the various dimensions required for achieving the right to adequate food.

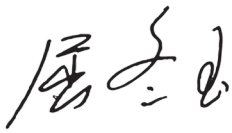
Despite these advancements, new challenges persist. Food insecurity and malnutrition have increased in several regions, exacerbated by the impacts of the climate crisis and shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, man-made conflicts, growing inequalities and shifting global food market dynamics. The concentration of market power and evolving dietary patterns have worsened consumption habits and health outcomes, including non-communicable diseases and obesity. These systemic challenges disproportionately impact marginalized communities, including the poor, women, Indigenous Peoples, and other groups in conditions of vulnerability.

FAO's Strategic Framework 2022-31 is dedicated to transforming agrifood systems through four key priorities – the Four Betters - and each of these priorities directly supports the right to food. **Better production** focuses on ensuring that agrifood systems are sustainable and efficient, making food both accessible and safe. **Better nutrition** aims to end hunger and improve access to nutritious food for everyone. A **better environment** seeks to protect ecosystems and address the climate crisis, which is crucial for supporting the sustainability of agrifood systems. A **better life** reduces inequalities and promotes social protection, ensuring that all individuals can exercise their right to food – leaving no one behind.

Looking ahead, it is essential to establish effective mechanisms for monitoring compliance and accountability, developing indices to track and monitor performance.

Promoting inclusivity, sustainability, and fairness, and fostering transparent dialogue among partners are critical. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms and building capacity within law enforcement and civil society are also essential for upholding the right to food. International agencies and donors must ensure that the right to food remains central to their strategic goals and decision-making processes.

The next decade will be crucial in realizing global commitments to eradicate hunger and malnutrition as we advance towards a future where everyone can enjoy the benefits of the Four Betters: better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life. Let us remain committed to the core values of the right to food as a basic human right, ensuring that no one is left behind.



QU Dongyu
FAO Director-General

FOREWORD

In 1996, at the World Food Summit, Heads of State and Government reaffirmed "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." The declaration of the World Food Summit: five years later, in June 2002, reaffirmed the importance of strengthening the respect of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and invited "the FAO Council to establish an Intergovernmental Working Group to develop a set of Voluntary Guidelines to support Member States' efforts to achieve the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security".

An Intergovernmental Working Group was established in November 2002 and working relationships, in particular with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, were strengthened. After two years of intense and constructive negotiations and discussions among members of the Intergovernmental Working Group and its Bureau as well as representatives of stakeholders and civil society, the Voluntary Guidelines were adopted by the FAO Council in November 2004.

The Voluntary Guidelines represent the first attempt by governments to interpret an economic, social and cultural right and to recommend actions to be undertaken for its realization. The objective of the Voluntary Guidelines is to provide practical guidance to States in their implementation of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, in order to achieve the goals of the World Food Summit Plan of Action. Relevant stakeholders could also benefit from such guidance. The Voluntary Guidelines cover the full range of actions to be considered by governments at the national level in order to build an enabling

environment for people to feed themselves in dignity and to establish appropriate safety nets for those who are unable to do so. They can be used to strengthen and improve current development frameworks, particularly with regard to social and human dimensions, putting the entitlements of people more firmly at the centre of development.

The Voluntary Guidelines represent a step towards integrating human rights into the work of agencies dealing with food and agriculture, such as FAO, as called for by the United Nations Secretary-General within his UN reforms. They provide an additional instrument to combat hunger and poverty and to accelerate attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

FAO is committed to strengthening its capacity, with the help of Member States, to assist willing governments to implement the Voluntary Guidelines.

The Organization looks forward to cooperating with governments and other key actors that wish to pursue rights-based approaches to poverty reduction and are interested in realizing the right to adequate food in the context of national food security by implementing the Voluntary Guidelines. Striving to ensure that every child, woman and man enjoy adequate food on a regular basis is not only a moral imperative and an investment with enormous economic returns; it also signifies the realization of a basic human right.



Jacques Diouf
Former Director-General (1994–2011)
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

PREFACE

1. The eradication of hunger is clearly reflected in the target set at the World Food Summit to reduce the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015 and as agreed by the Millennium Summit to "halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger" by the same year.

2. In the Rome Declaration on World Food Security, Heads of State and Government "reaffirm(ed) 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." Objective 7.4 of the World Food Summit Plan of Action established the task: "to clarify the content of the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, as stated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other relevant international and regional instruments, and to give particular attention to implementation and full and progressive realization of this right as a means of achieving food security for all."

3. The Plan of Action "invite(d) the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in consultation with relevant treaty bodies, and in collaboration with relevant specialized agencies and programmes of the UN system and appropriate intergovernmental mechanisms, to better define the rights related to food in Article 11 of the Covenant and to propose ways to implement and realize these rights as a means of achieving the commitments and objectives of the World Food Summit, taking into account the possibility of formulating voluntary guidelines for food security for all."

4. In response to the invitation by the World Food Summit, and following several international consultations, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted General Comment 12, which provided its experts' views on the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

5. In Paragraph 10 of the Declaration adopted at the 2002 World Food Summit: five years later, Heads of State and Government invited the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to establish at its 123rd session an Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG), in the context of the World Food Summit follow-up, with the following mandate: "to elaborate, with the participation of stakeholders, in a period of two years, a set of voluntary guidelines to support Member Nations' efforts to achieve the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security".

6. The objective of these Voluntary Guidelines is to provide practical guidance to States in their implementation of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, in order to achieve the goals of the Plan of Action of the World Food Summit. Relevant stakeholders could also benefit from such guidance.

7. The Voluntary Guidelines take into account a wide range of important considerations and principles, including equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, accountability and rule of law, and the principle that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated and interdependent. Food should not be used as a tool for political and economic pressure.

8. In developing these Voluntary Guidelines, the IGWG has benefited from the active participation of international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and representatives of civil society. The implementation of these Guidelines, which is primarily the responsibility of States, should benefit from the contribution of all members of civil society at large, including NGOs and the private sector.

9. These Voluntary Guidelines are a human rights-based practical tool addressed to all States. They do not establish legally binding obligations for States or international organizations, nor is any provision in them to be interpreted as amending, modifying or otherwise impairing rights and obligations under national and international law. States are encouraged to apply these Voluntary Guidelines in developing their strategies, policies, programmes and activities, and should do so without discrimination of any kind, such as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

INTRODUCTION

BASIC INSTRUMENTS

10. These Voluntary Guidelines have taken into account relevant international instruments,[1] in particular those instruments in which the progressive realization of the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, is enshrined.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 11

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international cooperation based on free consent.

2. The States Parties to the present Covenant, recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall take, individually and through international cooperation, the measures, including specific programmes, which are needed:

1 References in the Voluntary Guidelines to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other international treaties do not prejudice the position of any State with respect to signature, ratification or accession to those instruments.

a. to improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition and by developing or reforming agrarian systems in such a way as to achieve the most efficient development and utilization of natural resources;
b. taking into account the problems of both food-importing and food-exporting countries, to ensure an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 2:

1. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take steps, individually and through international assistance and cooperation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures.
2. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

11. Among others, Articles 55 and 56 of the Charter of the United Nations are relevant to these Voluntary Guidelines.

UN Charter, Article 55

With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote:

a. higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development;
b. solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems; and international cultural and educational co-operation; and
c. universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

UN Charter, Article 56
All Members pledge themselves to take joint and separate action in co-operation with the Organization for the achievement of the purposes set forth in Article 55.

12. Other international instruments, including the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the four Geneva Conventions and their two Additional Protocols also contain provisions relevant to these Voluntary Guidelines.

13. These Voluntary Guidelines have taken into account the commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration, including the development goals, as well as the outcomes and commitments of the major UN conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

14. The IGWG has also taken into account several Resolutions from the United Nations General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights and the General Comments adopted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF FOOD SECURITY

15. Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The four pillars of food security are availability, stability of supply, access and utilization.

16. The progressive realization of the right to adequate food requires States to fulfil their relevant human rights obligations under international law.
These Voluntary Guidelines aim to guarantee the availability of food in quantity and quality sufficient to satisfy the dietary needs of individuals; physical and economic accessibility for everyone, including vulnerable groups, to adequate food, free from unsafe substances and acceptable within a given culture; or the means of its procurement.

17. States have obligations under relevant international instruments relevant to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food. Notably, States Parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) have the obligation to respect, promote and protect and to take appropriate steps to achieve progressively the full realization of the right to adequate food. States Parties should respect existing access to adequate food by not taking any measures that result in preventing such access, and should protect the right of everyone to adequate food by taking steps so that enterprises and individuals do not deprive individuals of their access to adequate food. States Parties should promote policies intended to contribute to the progressive realization of people's right to adequate food by proactively engaging in activities intended to strengthen people's access to and utilization of resources and means to ensure their livelihood, including food security. States Parties should, to the extent that resources permit, establish and maintain safety nets or other assistance to protect those who are unable to provide for themselves.

18. States that are not Parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) are invited to consider ratifying the ICESCR.

19. At the national level, a human rights-based approach to food security emphasizes universal, interdependent, indivisible and interrelated human rights, the obligations of States and the roles of relevant stakeholders. It emphasizes the achievement of food security as an outcome of the realization of existing rights and includes certain key principles: the need to enable individuals to realize the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, the right to freedom of expression and the right to seek, receive and impart information, including in relation to decisionmaking about policies on realizing the right to adequate food. Such an approach should take into account the need for emphasis on poor and vulnerable people who are often excluded from the processes that determine policies to promote food security and the need for inclusive societies free from discrimination by the State in meeting their obligations to promote and respect human rights. In this approach, people hold their governments accountable and are participants in the process of human development, rather than being passive recipients. A human rights-based approach requires not only addressing the final outcome of abolishing hunger, but also proposing ways and tools by which that goal is achieved. Application of human rights principles is integral to the process.

1. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT, ASSISTANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Guideline 1
DEMOCRACY, GOOD GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RULE OF LAW

1.1 States should promote and safeguard a free, democratic and just society in order to provide a peaceful, stable and enabling economic, social, political and cultural environment in which individuals can feed themselves and their families in freedom and dignity.

1.2 States should promote democracy, the rule of law, sustainable development and good governance, and promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to empower individuals and civil society to make demands on their governments, devise policies that address their specific needs and ensure the accountability and transparency of governments and state decision-making processes in implementing such policies. States should, in particular, promote freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of information, freedom of the press and freedom of assembly and association, which enhances the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. Food should not be used as a tool for political and economic pressure.

1.3 States should also promote good governance as an essential factor for sustained economic growth, sustainable development, poverty and hunger eradication and for the realization of all human rights including the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

1.4 States should ensure, in accordance with their international human rights obligations, that all individuals, including human rights defenders of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food, are accorded equal protection under the law and that due process is guaranteed in all legal proceedings.

1.5 Where appropriate and consistent with domestic law, States may assist individuals and groups of individuals to have access to legal assistance to better assert the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

Guideline 2
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

2.1 In order to achieve the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, States should promote broad-based economic development that is supportive of their food security policies. States should establish policy goals and benchmarks based on the food security needs of their population.

2.2 States should assess, in consultation with key stakeholders, the economic and social situation, including the degree of food insecurity and its causes, the nutrition situation and food safety.

2.3 States should promote adequate and stable supplies of safe food through a combination of domestic production, trade, storage and distribution.

2.4 States should consider adopting a holistic and comprehensive approach to hunger and poverty reduction. Such an approach entails, *inter alia*, direct and immediate measures to ensure access to adequate food as part of a social safety net; investment in productive activities and projects to improve the livelihoods of the poor and hungry in a sustainable manner; the development of appropriate institutions, functioning markets, a conducive legal and regulatory framework; and access to employment, productive resources and appropriate services.

2.5 States should pursue inclusive, non-discriminatory and sound economic, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, land-use, and, as appropriate, land-reform policies, all of which will permit farmers, fishers, foresters and other food producers, particularly women, to earn a fair return from their labour, capital and management, and encourage conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, including in marginal areas.

2.6 Where poverty and hunger are predominantly rural, States should focus on sustainable agricultural and rural development through measures to improve access to land, water, appropriate and affordable technologies, productive and financial resources, enhance the productivity of poor rural communities, promote the participation of the poor in economic policy decisions, share the benefits of productivity gains, conserve and protect natural resources, and invest in rural infrastructure, education and research. In particular, States should adopt policies that create conditions that encourage stable employment, especially in rural areas, including off-farm jobs.

2.7 In response to the growing problem of urban hunger and poverty, States should promote investments aimed at enhancing the livelihoods of the urban poor.

Guideline 3
STRATEGIES

3.1 States, as appropriate and in consultation with relevant stakeholders and pursuant to their national laws, should consider adopting a national human-rights based strategy for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security as part of an overarching national development strategy, including poverty reduction strategies, where they exist.

3.2 The elaboration of these strategies should begin with a careful assessment of existing national legislation, policy and administrative measures, current programmes, systematic identification of existing constraints and availability of existing resources. States should formulate the measures necessary to remedy any weakness, and propose an agenda for change and the means for its implementation and evaluation.

3.3 These strategies could include objectives, targets, benchmarks and time frames; and actions to formulate policies, identify and mobilize resources, define institutional mechanisms, allocate responsibilities, coordinate the activities of different actors, and provide for monitoring mechanisms. As appropriate, such strategies could address all aspects of the food system, including the production,

processing, distribution, marketing and consumption of safe food. They could also address access to resources and to markets as well as parallel measures in other fields. These strategies should, in particular, address the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, as well as special situations such as natural disasters and emergencies.

3.4 Where necessary, States should consider adopting and, as appropriate, reviewing a natio nal poverty reduction strategy that specifically addresses access to adequate food.

3.5 States, individually or in cooperation with relevant international organizations, should consider integrating into their poverty reduction strategy a human rights perspective based on the principle of non-discrimination. In raising the standard of living of those below the poverty line, due regard should be given to the need to ensure equality in practice to those who are traditionally disadvantaged and between women and men.

3.6 In their poverty reduction strategies, States should also give priority to providing basic services for the poorest, and investing in human resources by ensuring access to primary education for all, basic health care, capacity building in good practices, clean drinking-water, adequate sanitation and justice and by supporting programmes in basic literacy, numeracy and good hygiene practices.

3.7 States are encouraged, *inter alia* and in a sustainable manner, to increase productivity and to revitalize the agriculture sector including livestock, forestry and fisheries through special policies and strategies targeted at small-scale and traditional fishers and farmers in rural areas, and the creation of enabling conditions for private sector participation, with emphasis on human capacity development and the removal of constraints to agricultural production, marketing and distribution.

3.8 In developing these strategies, States are encouraged to consult with civil society organizations and other key stakeholders at national and regional levels, including small-scale and traditional farmers, the private sector, women and youth associations, with the aim of promoting their active participation in all aspects of agricultural and food production strategies.

3.9 These strategies should be transparent, inclusive and comprehensive, cut across national policies, programmes and projects, take into account the special needs of girls and women, combine short-term and long-term objectives, and be prepared and implemented in a participatory and accountable manner.

3.10 States should support, including through regional cooperation, the implementation of national strategies for development, in particular for the reduction of poverty and hunger as well as for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

Guideline 4
MARKET SYSTEMS

4.1 States should, in accordance with their national law and priorities, as well as their international commitments, improve the functioning of their markets, in particular their agricultural and food markets, in order to promote both economic growth and sustainable development, inter alia, by mobilizing domestic savings, both public and private, by developing appropriate credit policies, by generating sustainable adequate levels of national productive investment through credits in concessional terms and by increasing human capacity.

4.2 States should put legislation, policies, procedures and regulatory and other institutions in place to ensure non-discriminatory access to markets and to prevent uncompetitive practices in markets.

4.3 States should encourage the development of corporate social responsibility and the commitment of all market players and civil society towards the progressive realization of the right of individuals to adequate food in the context of national food security.

4.4 States should provide adequate protection to consumers against fraudulent market practices, misinformation and unsafe food. The measures toward this objective should not constitute unjustified barriers to international trade and should be in conformity with the WTO agreements.

4.5 States should, as appropriate, promote the development of small-scale local and regional markets and border trade to reduce poverty and increase food security, particularly in poor rural and urban areas.

4.6 States may wish to adopt measures to ensure that the widest number of individuals and communities, especially disadvantaged groups, can benefit from opportunities created by competitive agricultural trade.

4.7 States should strive to ensure that food, agricultural trade and overall trade policies are conducive to fostering food security for all through a non-discriminatory and market-oriented local, regional, national and world trade system.

4.8 States should endeavour to establish well functioning internal marketing, storage, transportation, communication and distribution systems, *inter alia*, to facilitate diversified trade and better links within and between domestic, regional and world markets, as well as to take advantage of new market opportunities.

4.9 States will take into account that markets do not automatically result in everybody achieving a sufficient income at all times to meet basic needs, and should therefore seek to provide adequate social safety nets and, where appropriate, the assistance of the international community for this purpose.

4.10 States should take into account the shortcomings of market mechanisms in protecting the environment and public goods.

Guideline 5
INSTITUTIONS

5.1 States, where appropriate, should assess the mandate and performance of relevant public institutions and, where necessary, establish, reform or improve their organization and structure to contribute to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.

5.2 To this end, States may wish to ensure the coordinated efforts of relevant government ministries, agencies and offices. They

could establish national intersectoral coordination mechanisms to ensure the concerted implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans and programmes. States are encouraged to involve relevant communities in all aspects of planning and execution of activities in these areas.

5.3 States may also wish to entrust a specific institution with overall responsibility for overseeing and coordinating the application of these guidelines, bearing in mind the Declaration and Programme of Action of the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights and taking due account of existing agriculture conventions and protocols. In order to ensure transparency and accountability, the functions and tasks of this institution would need to be clearly defined, regularly reviewed and provision made for adequate monitoring mechanisms.

5.4 States should ensure that relevant institutions provide for full and transparent participation of the private sector and of civil society, in particular representatives of the groups most affected by food insecurity.

5.5 States should take measures, where and if necessary, to develop, strengthen, implement and maintain effective anticorruption legislation and policies, including in the food sector and in the management of emergency food aid.

Guideline 6
STAKEHOLDERS

6.1 Recognizing the primary responsibility of States for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food, States are encouraged to apply a multistakeholder approach to national food security to identify the roles of and involve all relevant stakeholders, encompassing civil society and the private sector, drawing together their know-how with a view to facilitating the efficient use of resources.

Guideline 7
LEGAL FRAMEWORK

7.1 States are invited to consider, in accordance with their domestic legal and policy frameworks, whether to include provisions in their domestic law, possibly including constitutional or legislative review that facilitates the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.

7.2 States are invited to consider, in accordance with their domestic legal and policy frameworks, whether to include provisions in their domestic law, which may nclude their constitutions, bills of rights or legislation, to directly implement the 16 progressive realization of the right to adequate food. Administrative, quasi-judicial and judicial mechanisms to provide adequate, effective and prompt remedies accessible, in particular, to members of vulnerable groups may be envisaged.

7.3 States that have established a right to adequate food under their legal system should inform the general public of all available rights and remedies to which they are entitled.

7.4 States should consider strengthening their domestic law and policies to accord access by women heads of households to poverty reduction and nutrition security programmes and projects.

Guideline 8
ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND ASSETS

8.1 States should facilitate sustainable, non-discriminatory and secure access and utilization of resources consistent with their national law and with international law and protect the assets that are important for people's livelihoods. States should respect and protect the rights of individuals with respect to resources such as land, water, forests, fisheries and livestock without any discrimination. Where necessary and appropriate, States should carry out land reforms and other policy reforms consistent with their human rights obligations and in accordance with the rule of law in order to secure efficient and equitable access to land and to strengthen propoor growth. Special attention may be given

to groups such as pastoralists and indigenous people and their relation to natural resources.

8.2 States should take steps so that members of vulnerable groups can have access to opportunities and economic resources in order to participate fully and equally in the economy.

8.3 States should pay particular attention to the specific access problems of women and of vulnerable, marginalized and traditionally disadvantaged groups, including all persons affected by HIV/AIDS. States should take measures to protect all people affected by HIV/AIDS from losing their access to resources and assets.

8.4 States should promote agricultural research and development, in particular to promote basic food production with its positive effects on basic incomes and its benefits to small and women farmers, as well as poor consumers.

8.5 States should, within the framework of relevant international agreements, including those on intellectual property, promote access by medium- and smallscale farmers to research results enhancing food security.

8.6 States should promote women's full and equal participation in the economy and, for this purpose, introduce, where it does not exist, and implement gendersensitive legislation providing women with the right to inherit and possess land and other property. States should also provide women with secure and equal access to, control over, and benefits from productive resources, including credit, land, water and appropriate technologies.

8.7 States should design and implement programmes that include different mechanisms of access and appropriate use of agricultural land directed to the poorest populations.

Guideline 8A
LABOUR

8.8 States should take measures to encourage sustainable development in order to provide opportunities for work that provide remuneration allowing for an adequate standard of living for rural and urban wage earners and their families, and to promote and

protect self-employment. For States that have ratified the relevant instruments, working conditions should be consistent with the obligations they have assumed under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, relevant ILO Conventions and other treaties including human rights conventions.

8.9 In order to improve access to the labour market, States should enhance human capital through education programmes, adult literacy and additional training programmes, as required, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Guideline 8b
LAND

8.10 States should take measures to promote and protect the security of land tenure, especially with respect to women, and poor and disadvantaged segments of society, through legislation that protects the full and equal right to own land and other property, including the right to inherit. As appropriate, States should consider establishing legal and other policy mechanisms, consistent with their international human rights obligations and in accordance with the rule of law, that advance land reform to enhance access for the poor and women. Such mechanisms should also promote conservation and sustainable use of land. Special consideration should be given to the situation of indigenous communities.

Guideline 8c
WATER

8.11 Bearing in mind that access to water in sufficient quantity and quality for all is fundamental for life and health, States should strive to improve access to, and promote sustainable use of, water resources and their allocation among users giving due regard to efficiency and the satisfaction of basic human needs in an equitable manner and that balances the requirement of preserving or restoring the functioning of ecosystems with domestic, industrial and agricultural needs, including safeguarding drinking-water quality.

Guideline 8d
GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

8.12 States, taking into account the importance of biodiversity, and consistent with their obligations under relevant international agreements, should consider specific national policies, legal instruments and supporting mechanisms to prevent the erosion of and ensure the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture, including, as appropriate, for the protection of relevant traditional knowledge and equitable participation in sharing benefits arising from the use of these resources, and by encouraging, as appropriate, the participation of local and indigenous communities and farmers in making national decisions on matters related to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture.

Guideline 8e
SUSTAINABILITY

8.13 States should consider specific national policies, legal instruments and supporting mechanisms to protect ecological sustainability and the carrying capacity of ecosystems to ensure the possibility for increased, sustainable food production for present and future generations, prevent water pollution, protect the fertility of the soil, and promote the sustainable management of fisheries and forestry.

Guideline 8f
SERVICES

8.14 States should create an enabling environment and strategies to facilitate and support the development of private and public sector initiatives to promote appropriate tools, technologies and mechanization in the provision of relevant services, including research, extension, marketing, rural finance and microcredit, to enable more efficient food production by all farmers, in particular poor farmers, and to address local constraints such as shortage of land, water and farm power.

Guideline 9
FOOD SAFETY AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

9.1 States should take measures to ensure that all food, whether locally produced or imported, freely available or sold on markets, is safe and consistent with national food safety standards.

9.2 States should establish comprehensive and rational food-control systems that reduce risk of food-borne disease using risk analysis and supervisory mechanisms to ensure food safety in the entire food chain including animal feed.

9.3 States are encouraged to take action to streamline institutional procedures for food control and food safety at national level and eliminate gaps and overlaps in inspection systems and in the legislative and regulatory framework for food. States are encouraged to adopt scientifically based food safety standards, including standards for additives, contaminants, residues of veterinary drugs and pesticides, and microbiological hazards, and to establish standards for the packaging, labelling and advertising of food. These standards should take into consideration internationally accepted food standards (Codex Alimentarius) in accordance with the WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement (SPS). States should take action to prevent contamination from industrial and other pollutants in the production, processing, storage, transport, distribution, handling and sale of food.

9.4 States may wish to establish a national coordinating committee for food to bring together both governmental and non-governmental actors involved in the food system and to act as liaison with the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission. States should consider collaborating with private stakeholders in the food system, both by assisting them in exercising controls on their own production and handling practices, and by auditing those controls.

9.5 Where necessary, States should assist farmers and other primary producers to follow good agricultural practices, food processors to follow good manufacturing practices, and food handlers to follow good hygiene practices. States are encouraged to consider establishing food safety systems and supervisory mechanisms to ensure the provision of safe food to consumers.

9.6 States should ensure that education on safe practices is available for food business operators so that their activities neither lead to harmful residues in food nor cause harm to the environment. States should also take measures to educate consumers about the safe storage, handling and utilization of food within the household. States should collect and disseminate information to the public regarding food-borne diseases and food safety matters, and should cooperate with regional and international organizations addressing food safety issues.

9.7 States should adopt measures to protect consumers from deception and misrepresentation in the packaging, labelling, advertising and sale of food and facilitate consumers' choice by ensuring appropriate information on marketed food, and provide recourse for any harm caused by unsafe or adulterated food, including food offered by street sellers. Such measures should not be used as unjustified barriers to trade; they should be in conformity with the WTO agreements (in particular SPS and TBT).

9.8 Developed countries are encouraged to provide technical assistance to developing countries through advice, credits, donations and grants for capacity building and training in food safety. When possible and appropriate, developing countries with more advanced capabilities in food safety-related areas are encouraged to lend assistance to less advanced developing countries.

9.9 States are encouraged to cooperate with all stakeholders, including regional and international consumer organizations, in addressing food safety issues, and consider their participation in national and international fora where policies with impact on food production, processing, distribution, storage and marketing are discussed.

Guideline 10
NUTRITION

10.1 If necessary, States should take measures to maintain, adapt or strengthen dietary diversity and healthy eating habits and food preparation, as well as feeding patterns, including breastfeeding, while ensuring that changes in availability and access to food supply do not negatively affect dietary composition and intake.

10.2 States are encouraged to take steps, in particular through education, information and labelling regulations, to prevent overconsumption and unbalanced diets that may lead to malnutrition, obesity and degenerative diseases.

10.3 States are encouraged to involve all relevant stakeholders, in particular communities and local government, in the design, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of programmes to increase the production and consumption of healthy and nutritious foods, especially those that are rich in micronutrients. States may wish to promote gardens both at home and at school as a key element in combating micronutrient deficiencies and promoting healthy eating. States may also consider adopting regulations for fortifying foods to prevent and cure micronutrient deficiencies, in particular of iodine, iron and Vitamin A.

10.4 States should address the specific food and nutritional needs of people living with HIV/AIDS or suffering from other epidemics.

10.5 States should take appropriate measures to promote and encourage breastfeeding, in line with their cultures, the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent resolutions of the World Health Assembly, in accordance with the WHO/UNICEF recommendations.

10.6 States may wish to disseminate information on the feeding of infants and young children that is consistent and in line with current scientific knowledge and internationally accepted practices and to take steps to counteract misinformation on infant feeding. States should consider with utmost care issues regarding breastfeeding and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection on the basis of the most up-to-date, authoritative scientific advice and referring to the latest WHO/ UNICEF guidelines.

10.7 States are invited to take parallel action in the areas of health, education and sanitary infrastructure and promote intersectoral collaboration, so that necessary services and goods become available to people to enable them to make full use of the dietary value in the food they eat and thus achieve nutritional well-being.

10.8 States should adopt measures to eradicate any kind of discriminatory practices, especially with respect to gender, in order to achieve adequate levels of nutrition within the household.

10.9 States should recognize that food is a vital part of an individual's culture, and they are encouraged to take into account individuals' practices, customs and traditions on matters related to food.

10.10 States are reminded of the cultural values of dietary and eating habits in different cultures and should establish methods for promoting food safety, positive nutritional intake including fair distribution of food within communities and households with special emphasis on the needs and rights of both girls and boys, as well as pregnant women and lactating mothers, in all cultures.

Guideline 11
EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING

11.1 States should support investment in human resource development such as health, education, literacy and other skills training, which are essential to sustainable development, including agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development.

11.2 States should strengthen and broaden primary education opportunities, especially for girls, women and other underserved populations.

11.3 States should encourage agricultural and environmental education at the primary and secondary levels in order to create a better awareness in new generations about the importance of conserving and making sustainable use of natural resources.

11.4 States should support higher education by strengthening developing country university and technical faculties of agriculture-related disciplines and business to carry out both education and research functions, and by engaging universities throughout the world in training developing country agriculturalists, scientists and businesspeople at the graduate and post-graduate levels.

11.5 States should provide information to individuals to strengthen their ability to participate in food-related policy decisions that may affect them, and to challenge decisions that threaten their rights.

11.6 States should implement measures to make people improve their housing conditions and their means for food preparation, because they are related to food safety. Such measures should be made in the educative and infrastructure fields, especially in rural households.

11.7 States should promote, and/or integrate into school curricula, human rights education, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, which includes the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

11.8 States are encouraged to promote awareness of the importance of human rights, including the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

11.9 States should provide proper training to officials responsible for the implementation of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

11.10 States should raise public awareness of these guidelines and continuously provide and improve access to them and to relevant human rights laws and regulations, particularly in rural and remote areas.

11.11 States may wish to empower civil society to participate in the implementation of these guidelines, for instance through capacity building.

Guideline 12
NATIONAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES

12.1 Regional and local authorities are encouraged to allocate resources for antihunger and food security purposes in their respective budgets.

12.2 States should ensure transparency and accountability in the use of public resources, particularly in the area of food security.

12.3 States are encouraged to promote basic social programmes and expenditures, in particular those affecting the poor and the vulnerable segments of society, and to protect them from budget reductions, while increasing the quality and effectiveness of social expenditures. States should strive to ensure that budget cuts do not negatively affect access to adequate food among the poorest sections of society.

12.4 States are encouraged to establish an enabling legal and economic environment to promote and mobilize domestic savings and attract external resources for productive investment, and seek innovative sources of funding, both public and private at national and international levels, for social programmes.

12.5 States are invited to take appropriate steps and suggest strategies to contribute to raise awareness of the families of migrants in order to promote efficient use of the remittances of migrants for investments that could improve their livelihoods, including the food security of their families.

Guideline 13
SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

13.1 Consistent with the World Food Summit commitment, States should establish Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS), in order to identify groups and households particularly vulnerable to food insecurity along with the reasons for their food insecurity. States should develop and identify corrective measures to be implemented both immediately and progressively to provide access to adequate food.

13.2 States are invited to systematically undertake disaggregated analysis on the food insecurity, vulnerability and nutritional status of different groups in society, with particular attention to assessing any form of discrimination that may manifest itself in greater food insecurity and vulnerability to food insecurity, or in a higher prevalence of malnutrition among specific population groups, or both, with a view to removing and preventing such causes of food insecurity or malnutrition.

13.3 States should establish transparent, non-discriminatory eligibility criteria in order to ensure effective targeting of assistance, so that no one who is in need is excluded, or that those not in need of assistance are included. Effective accountability and administrative systems are essential to prevent leakages and corruption. Factors to take into account include household and individual assets and income, nutrition and health status, as well as existing coping mechanisms.

13.4 States may wish to give priority to channelling food assistance via women as a means of enhancing their decision-making role and ensuring that the food is used to meet the household's food requirements.

Guideline 14
SAFETY NETS

14.1 States should consider, to the extent that resources permit, establishing and maintaining social safety and food safety nets to protect those who are unable to provide for themselves. As far as possible, and with due regard to effectiveness and coverage, States should consider building on existing capacities within communities at risk to provide the necessary resources for social safety and food safety nets to fulfil the progressive realization of the right to adequate food. States may wish to consider the benefits of procuring locally.

14.2 States and international organizations should consider the benefits of local procurement for food assistance that could integrate the nutritional needs of those affected by food insecurity and the commercial interests of local producers.

14.3 Although the design of social and food safety nets will depend on the nature of food insecurity, objectives, budget, existing administrative capacity and local circumstances such as levels of food supply and local food markets, States should nonetheless ensure that they adequately target those in need and respect the principle of non-discrimination in the establishment of eligibility criteria.

14.4 States should take steps, to the extent that resources permit, so that any measure of an economic or financial nature likely to have a negative impact on existing levels of food consumption of vulnerable groups be accompanied by provision for effective food safety nets. Safety nets should be linked to other complementary interventions that promote food security in the longer term.

14.5 In situations where it has been determined that food plays an appropriate role in safety nets, food assistance should bridge the gap between the nutritional needs of the affected population and their ability to meet those needs themselves. Food assistance should be provided with the fullest possible participation of those affected, and such food should be nutritionally adequate and safe, bearing in mind local circumstances, dietary traditions and cultures.

14.6 States should consider accompanying food assistance in safety net schemes with complementary activities to maximize benefits towards ensuring people's access to and utilization of adequate food. Essential complementary activities include access to clean water and sanitation, health care interventions and nutrition education activities.

14.7 States, in the design of safety nets, should consider the important role of international organizations such as FAO, IFAD and WFP, and other relevant international, regional and civil society organizations that can assist them in fighting rural poverty and promoting food security and agricultural development.

Guideline 15
INTERNATIONAL FOOD AID

15.1 Donor States should ensure that their food aid policies support national efforts by recipient States to achieve food security, and base their food aid provisions on sound needs assessment, targeting especially food insecure and vulnerable groups. In this context, donor States should provide assistance in a manner that takes into account food safety, the importance of not disrupting local food production and the nutritional and dietary needs and cultures of recipient populations. Food aid should be provided with a clear exit strategy and avoid the creation of dependency. Donors

should promote increased use of local and regional commercial markets to meet food needs in famine-prone countries and reduce dependence on food aid.

15.2 International food-aid transactions, including bilateral food aid that is monetized, should be carried out in a manner consistent with the FAO Principles of Surplus Disposal and Consultative Obligations, the Food Aid Convention and the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, and should meet the internationally agreed food safety standards, bearing in mind local circumstances, dietary traditions and cultures.

15.3 States and relevant non-state actors should ensure, in accordance with international law, safe and unimpeded access to the populations in need, as well as for international needs assessments, and by humanitarian agencies involved in the distribution of international food assistance.

15.4 The provision of international food aid in emergency situations should take particular account of longer-term rehabilitation and development objectives in the recipient countries, and should respect universally recognized humanitarian principles.

15.5 The assessment of needs and the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the provision of food aid should, as far as possible, be made in a participatory manner and, whenever possible, in close collaboration with recipient governments at the national and local level.

Guideline 16
NATURAL AND HUMAN-MADE DISASTERS

16.1 Food should never be used as a means of political and economic pressure.

16.2 States reaffirm the obligations they have assumed under international humanitarian law and, in particular, as parties to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and/or the 1977 Additional Protocols thereto with respect to the humanitarian needs of the civilian population, including their access to food in situations of armed conflict and occupation, *inter alia*,

Additional Protocol I provides, inter alia, that "(t)he starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited" and that "(i)t is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works, for the specific purpose of denying them, for their sustenance value to the civilian population or to the adverse party, whatever the motive, whether in order to starve out civilians, to cause them to move away, or for any other motive", and that "these objects shall not be made the object of reprisals".

16.3 In situations of occupation, international humanitarian law provides, *inter alia*: that to the fullest extent of the means available to it, the Occupying Power has the duty of ensuring the food and medical supplies of the population; that it should, in particular, bring in the necessary foodstuffs, medical stores and other articles if the resources of the Occupied Territory are inadequate; and that if the whole or part of the population of an Occupied Territory is inadequately supplied, the Occupying Power shall agree to relief schemes on behalf of the said population, and shall facilitate them by all the means at its disposal.[2]

16.4 States reaffirm the obligations they have assumed regarding the protection, safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

16.5 States should make every effort to ensure that refugees and internally displaced persons have access at all times to adequate food. In this respect, States and other relevant stakeholders should be encouraged to make use of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement when dealing with situations of internal displacement.

16.6 In the case of natural or human-made disasters, States should provide food assistance to those in need, may request international assistance if their own resources do not suffice, and should facilitate safe and unimpeded access for international assistance

2 1949 Geneva Convention IV Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Articles 55, 59.

in accordance with international law and universally recognized humanitarian principles, bearing in mind local circumstances, dietary traditions and cultures.

16.7 States should put in place adequate and functioning mechanisms of early warning to prevent or mitigate the effects of natural or human-made disasters. Early warning systems should be based on international standards and cooperation, on reliable, disaggregated data and should be constantly monitored. States should take appropriate emergency preparedness measures, such as keeping food stocks for the acquisition of food, and take steps to put in place adequate systems for distribution.

16.8 States are invited to consider establishing mechanisms to assess nutritional impact and to gain understanding of the coping strategies of affected households in the event of natural or human-made disasters. This should inform the targeting, design, implementation and evaluation of relief, rehabilitation and resilience building programmes.

Guideline 17
MONITORING, INDICATORS AND BENCHMARKS

17.1 States may wish to establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation of these guidelines towards the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, in accordance with their capacity and by building on existing information systems and addressing information gaps.

17.2 States may wish to consider conducting "Right to Food Impact Assessments" in order to identify the impact of domestic policies, programmes and projects on the progressive realization of the right to adequate food of the population at large and vulnerable groups in particular, and as a basis for the adoption of the necessary corrective measures.

17.3 States may also wish to develop a set of process, impact and outcome indicators, relying on indicators already in use and monitoring systems such as FIVIMS, so as to assess the implementation of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food. They may wish to establish appropriate

benchmarks to be achieved in the short, medium and long term, which relate directly to meeting poverty and hunger reduction targets as a minimum, as well as other national and international goals including those adopted at the World Food Summit and the Millennium Summit.

17.4 In this evaluation process, process indicators could be so identified or designed that they explicitly relate and reflect the use of specific policy instruments and interventions with outcomes consistent with the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. Such indicators could enable States to implement legal, policy and administrative measures, detect discriminatory practices and outcomes, and ascertain the extent of political and social participation in the process of realizing that right.

17.5 States should, in particular, monitor the food security situation of vulnerable groups, especially women, children and the elderly, and their nutritional status, including the prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies.

17.6 In this evaluation process, States should ensure a participatory approach to information gathering, management, analysis, interpretation and dissemination.

Guideline 18
NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS

18.1 States that have as a matter of national law or policy adopted a rights-based approach, and national human rights institutions or ombudspersons, may wish to include the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security in their mandates. States that do not have national human rights institutions or ombudspersons are encouraged to establish them. Human rights institutions should be independent and autonomous from the government, in accordance with the Paris Principles. States should encourage civil society organizations and individuals to contribute to monitoring activities undertaken by national human rights institutions with respect to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

18.2 States are invited to encourage efforts by national institutions to establish partnerships and increase cooperation with civil society.

Guideline 19
INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

19.1 States should fulfil those measures, actions and commitments on the international dimension, as described in Section III below, in support of the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines, which assist States in their national efforts in the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security as set forth by the World Food Summit and the World Food Summit: *five years later* within the context of the Millennium Declaration.

2. INTERNATIONAL MEASURES, ACTIONS AND COMMITMENTS

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND UNILATERAL MEASURES

1. In the context of recent major international conferences, the international community has stated its deep concern over the persistence of hunger, its readiness to support national governments in their efforts to combat hunger and malnutrition and its commitment to cooperate actively within the global partnership for development, which includes the International Alliance Against Hunger.

2. States have the primary responsibility for their own economic and social development, including the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. Stressing that national development efforts should be supported by an enabling international environment, the international community and the UN system, including FAO, as well as other relevant agencies and bodies according to their mandates, are urged to take actions in supporting national development efforts for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. This essential role of international cooperation is recognized, *inter alia*, in article 56 of the Charter of the United Nations as well as in the outcomes of major international conferences such as the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Food should not be used as a tool of economic and political pressure.

3. States are strongly urged to take steps with a view to the avoidance of, and refrain from, any unilateral measure not in accordance with international law and the charter of the United Nations that impedes the full achievement of economic and social development by the populations of the affected countries and that hinders their progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

4. Consistent with commitments made at various international conferences, in particular the Monterrey Consensus, developed countries should assist developing countries in attaining international development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. States and relevant international organizations according to their respective mandates should actively support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food at the national level. External support, including South–South cooperation, should be coordinated with national policies and priorities.

TECHNICAL COOPERATION

5. Developed and developing countries should act in partnership to support their efforts to achieve the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security through technical cooperation, including institutional capacity building, and transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, as committed in the major international conferences, in all areas covered in these guidelines, with special focus on impediments to food security such as HIV/AIDS.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

6. International trade can play a major role in the promotion of economic development, and the alleviation of poverty and improving food security at the national level.

7. States should promote international trade as one of the effective instruments for development, as expanded international trade could open opportunities to reduce hunger and poverty in many of the developing countries.

8 It is recalled that the long-term objective referred to in the WTO Agreement on Agriculture is to establish a fair and market-oriented trading system through a programme of fundamental reform encompassing strengthened rules and specific commitments on support and protection in order to correct and prevent restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets.

9. States are urged to implement commitments expressed at various relevant international conferences and the recommendations of the São Paulo Consensus (the eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) including, for example, those reproduced below:

> **75.** Agriculture is a central element in the current negotiations. Efforts should be intensified to achieve the internationally agreed aims embodied in the three pillars of the Doha mandate, namely substantial improvements in market access; reductions of, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies; and substantial reductions in tradedistorting domestic support. The negotiations on agriculture taking place in the WTO should deliver an outcome that is consistent with the ambition set out in the Doha mandate. Special and differential treatment for developing countries shall be an integral part of all elements of the negotiations and shall take fully into account development needs in a manner consistent with the Doha mandate, including food security and rural development. Non-trade concerns of countries will be taken into account, as provided for in the Agreement on Agriculture, in accordance with paragraph 13 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration.
>
> ...
>
> **77.** Efforts at extending market access liberalization for non-agricultural products under the Doha Work Programme should be intensified with the aim of reducing or, as appropriate, eliminating tariffs, including tariff peaks, high tariffs and tariff escalation, as well as non-tariff barriers, in particular on products of export interest to developing countries. Negotiations should take fully into account the special needs and interests of developing countries and LDCs, including through less than full reciprocity in reduction commitments.

10. Such measures can contribute to strengthening an enabling environment for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.

EXTERNAL DEBT

11. States and relevant international organizations should, as appropriate, pursue external debt relief measures vigorously and expeditiously in order to release resources for combating hunger, alleviating rural and urban poverty and promoting sustainable development. Creditors and debtors must share the responsibility for preventing and resolving unsustainable debt situations. Speedy, effective and full implementation of the enhanced heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative, which should be fully financed by additional resources, is critical. Furthermore, all official and commercial creditors are urged to participate in this initiative. Heavily indebted poor countries should take or continue to take policy measures required to ensure the full implementation of the HIPC initiative.

OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

12. Consistent with the Monterrey Consensus, developed countries should assist developing countries in attaining international development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, by providing adequate technical and financial assistance and by making concrete efforts towards the targets for ODA of 0.7 percent of GNP to developing countries and 0.15 percent to 0.2 percent of GNP to least developed countries. This should be linked to efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of aid, including through better coordination, closer integration with national development strategies, greater predictability and stability and genuine national ownership. Donors should be encouraged to take steps to ensure that resources provided for debt relief do not detract from ODA resources intended to be available for developing countries. Developing countries are encouraged to build on progress achieved in ensuring that ODA is used effectively to help achieve development goals and targets. In addition, voluntary financial mechanisms supportive of efforts to achieve sustained growth, development and poverty eradication should be explored.

INTERNATIONAL FOOD AID

13. States that provide international assistance in the form of food aid should regularly examine their relevant policies and, if necessary, review them to support national efforts by recipient States to progressively realize the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. In the broader context of food security policy, States should base their food aid policies on sound needs assessment that involves both recipient and donors and that targets especially needy and vulnerable groups. In this context, States should provide such assistance in a manner that takes into account the importance of food safety, local and regional food production capacity and benefits, and the nutritional needs as well as cultures of recipient populations.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH NGOS/CSOS/PRIVATE SECTOR

14. States, international organizations, civil society, the private sector, all relevant non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders should promote the trengthening of partnerships and coordinated action, including programmes and capacity development efforts, with a view to strengthening the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.

PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD

15. The organs and specialized agencies related to human rights should continue to enhance the coordination of their activities based on the consistent and objective application of international human right instruments, including the promotion of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food. The promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms must be considered a priority objective of the United Nations in accordance with its purposes and principles, in particular the purpose of international cooperation. In the framework of these purposes and principles, the promotion and protection of all human rights, including the progressive realization of the right to adequate food, is a legitimate concern of all Member States, the international community and civil society.

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING

16. States may report on a voluntary basis on relevant activities and progress achieved in implementing the Voluntary Guidelines on the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, to the FAO Committee on World Food Security (CFS) within its reporting procedures.







The objective of the Voluntary Guidelines is to provide practical guidance to States in their implementation of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, in order to achieve the goals of the World Food Summit Plan of Action. They provide an additional instrument to combat hunger and poverty and to accelerate attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Voluntary Guidelines represent the first attempt by governments to interpret an economic, social and cultural right and to recommend actions to be undertaken for its realization. Moreover, they represent a step towards integrating human rights into the work of agencies dealing with food and agriculture.

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