

ROSA Watch

Rosa Watch is a monthly bulletin that aims to bring you up-to-date useful information about food security, and do so rapidly and directly.

Each issue has:

- 1) a main subject with a common database of reference documents available from the **ROSA online library**
- 2) a selection of new documents put online and regularly updated by a watch on subjects dealt with by the network.

In this issue:

- **ROSA Document Database:**
On the subject of **the right to food**
- **ROSA News**
February - March 2009

Would you like to tell us about some news or a recently published article, or just make a comment? Contact the team of moderators (animation@reseau-rosa.eu). All contributions are welcome!

THIS MONTH'S EDITORIAL

This month's bulletin provides additional information to ROSA Focus N° 13 (February 2009)

The theme of the Monthly Highlight was the right to adequate food as relates to food security questions. This bulletin deals with the subject to provide ROSA members with some reference documents on the right to food.

The first set of documents presents the main legal texts that constitute the right to food, along with the official analyses of the texts. The first definition of the right to food is found in 1966 in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR). In 1999, General Comment N°12 was added, spelling out the obligations of the Covenant's Member States. In 2004, the FAO adopted its Voluntary Guidelines on how countries should put the right to food into practice in their different policy sectors. The 2008 Cordoba Declaration is an update of questions on the right to food in the context of the food crisis, but has no legal binding force.

A second group of texts looks at development and food security issues of the right to food. The CETIM (Europe-Third World Centre) and the FAO text on Latin America have analysed trends in the right to food and suggest ways of applying it in developing countries. The document of the office of the High Commissioner on human rights gives an approach of cooperation for development based on human rights. The summary from the Food Security and Nutrition Forum offers an overview on present debates concerning the links between right to food and food security. In two recent texts, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food raised the question of how the right to food should be taken into consideration in the international development agenda.

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Some texts also insist on practical experiences and practical attempts to apply food rights. Some FAO documents give practical guidelines and examples of applying the right to food nationally. A FIAN (Foodfirst Information and Action Network) and Rights and Democracy study shows how these guidelines can apply to one in particular: Malawi. A case study on an action in India shows more precisely how court cases can help legislation change, and perhaps ultimately change policies so that they take account of food rights. Several Internet sites provide up-to-date information on current procedures for applying the right to food in different countries.

ONLINE LIBRARY

ROSA Focus Monthly Highlight N° 13 (February 2009) - Food security and the right to adequate food

The Monthly Highlight looks at how food security and food rights approaches converge. It defines key concepts and analyses the content, limits and application of the right to food at a national level.

The article emphasises that the right to food needs to be better recognised, and that legal and non-legal mechanisms need reinforcing if it is to be applied fully. Right to food and food security approaches can be complementary. But the areas of convergence, particularly at the operational level remain underexplored to a great extent.

In English: [Food security and the right to food](#)

In French: [La sécurité alimentaire et le droit à l'alimentation](#)

Right to Food Official documents

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - UN (1966)

This Covenant was signed in 1966 and has since been ratified by 148 UN Member States. Each of these countries agreed to do as much as its available resources permitted to ensure that these rights were progressively applied.

Article 11 defines the right to adequate food as “a fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger”. So countries must help improve methods of food production, conservation and

distribution, and ensure most equitable distribution throughout the world.

In English: [International Covenant on ESCR](#)

In French: [Pacte international relatif aux DESC \(+ liste des Etats signataires\)](#)

General Comment N°12 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) on the Right to Food (1999)

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) used its General Comment and its analyses of reports from Member States to clarify the meaning of the ambiguous measures in the Covenant. The General Comment adopted in 1999 was particularly important because it gave a much better definition of the right to food, and better guidelines on how countries should act. It analyses the normative content of the right to food, the obligations of Member States for its implementation at the national and international levels.

In English: [General Comment N°12](#)

In French: [Observation générale N°12](#)

Voluntary Guidelines to support the realization of the right to adequate food - FAO (2004)

The Working Group on the Voluntary Guidelines was set up during the 2002 World Food Summit with the remit “to support Member States’ efforts to achieve the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security”. The Guidelines adopted in 2004 underline the measures that States must implement at the national and international levels for the realization of the right to food. They deal with different development issues, such as legal and institutional questions, issues of good governance and national strategies, along with wider issues such as the economy, market operation, nutrition, food policies, education, women's rights, support for vulnerable groups, emergency and international aid, and the whole international dimension.

In English: [Voluntary Guidelines on the right to food](#)

In French: [Directives volontaires sur le droit à l'alimentation](#)

Cordoba Declaration on the right to food (10th December 2008)

This declaration was launched on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Universal declaration of Human Rights. It presents a number of issues and recommendations that should be given attention in further work dealing with chronic hunger and the aggravation of the food crisis. The present Declaration demonstrates how the right to food can tackle the structural causes of hunger and contribute to food security for all.

In English: [Cordoba Declaration](#)

In French: [Déclaration de Cordoue](#)

**Right to Food
Discussion papers**

The right to food - Europe Third World Centre (CETIM) (2005)

The ability to demand the realization of the right to food, and the possibility of obtaining reparation or compensation depend to a great extent on the information and monitoring mechanisms available on the national, regional and international levels. The aim of this primer is two-fold: i) to help improve information available on the right to food; ii) to present the national and international monitoring mechanisms that can be used if the right to food is infringed.

In English: [The right to food - CETIM](#)

In French: [Le droit à l'alimentation – CETIM](#)

Food security and the human right to food. Going on parallel tracks or converging? - Food Security and Nutrition Forum (2008)

This paper is the result of a virtual forum organised by the FAO from 23rd September to 6th November 2008 on the relationship between food security and the right to food. It highlights the opportunities, challenges, limits and future issues in trying to make the two approaches converge. The forum participants also report on some field experiences in India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Malawi and Kenya.

In English: [Food security and the human right to food](#)

Frequently asked questions on a human rights-based approach to development cooperation - UNCHR (2006)

This UN High Commissioner for human rights publication answers several ambiguous questions

for applying a human rights-based approach to development. It does not just look at the right to food, but the answers provide keys to understanding the advantages of this approach; questions include: "What are the obligations in terms of human rights? Do individuals have obligations, like States? What is the connection between human rights and poverty reduction? How do human rights guide the way developments programmes are formulated?"

In English: [Frequently asked questions](#)

In French: [Questions fréquentes](#)

The role of development cooperation and food aid in realizing the right to adequate food: moving from charity to obligation - Olivier de Schutter (February 2009)

This paper from the UN Special Rapporteur for the right to food tries to show how to integrate the food rights approach into food aid and cooperation for development programmes. It needs to be integrated at three levels: i) in the definition of the obligations of donor States; ii) in the identification of the tools on which these policies rely; iii) in the evaluation of these policies. The Rapporteur claims that if the right to food is integrated correctly, the effect will be a change from the old bilateral Donor State / Recipient State relationship to a new tripartite relationship in which the ultimate beneficiaries of these policies play an active role.

In English: [The role of development cooperation and food aid in realizing the right to food](#)

Building resilience: a human rights framework for world food and nutrition security - Olivier de Schutter (September 2008)

In the context of the food crisis related to the volatility of food prices, the UN Special Rapporteur evokes the choices that States must make to meet their national and international obligations in terms of the right to adequate food. De Schutter explains how the right to food can guide States towards policies that should benefit from high prices. However, he calls for continual monitoring of the international and national initiatives taken to stop the crisis.

In English: [Building resilience](#)

In French: [Renforcer la capacité d'adaptation](#)

The right to food in Latin America - FAO (March 2009)

This document was written as part of the "Hunger Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative". The first part of the document shows how the concept of the right to food has evolved, and how it is linked to food security and food sovereignty. The author then looks at the situation of the right to food in Latin America. He believes that Latin America has the lead over other continents in the way national law courts take account of food rights. Several Latin American countries have already voted laws specifying how food rights apply, and have set up coordinating structures to ensure they are complied with, and other countries are working on this.

In English: [The right to food in Latin America](#)

**Right to Food
Practical papers**

The right to food guidelines. Information papers and case studies - FAO (2006)

This FAO document aims to be a reference on applying the right to food. The first chapters define and interpret the different official texts on the right to food. Then the document deals with questions on applying the right to food (national and international obligations, justiciability, etc.). The report ends with conclusions drawn from 6 case studies from 2004 on applying the right to food (Brazil, Canada, Uganda, South Africa and two cases in India). These studies are available on FAO's right to food portal (see below).

In English: [The right to food guidelines. case studies](#)

In French: [Directives du droit à l'alimentation. Etudes de cas](#)

The right to food in practice. Implementation at the national level - FAO (2006)

This FAO best practice guide summarises experiences in the right to food, and provides guidelines for transposing them into national law. The report also describes effective actions that can be envisaged in order to ensure compliance with the right to food, in terms of advocacy, training, information and legislation. The last part deals with the need to assess and monitor how the right to food is applied.

In English: [The right to food in practice](#)

In French: [Le droit à l'alimentation dans les faits](#)

The human right to food in Malawi - Rights and Democracy/FIAN (2006)

This report was written from a facts-finding mission of international experts in Malawi. It illustrates how official documents can apply in one specific country. In light of international treaties and based on the country food situation, the authors draw up conclusions on the major restraints and opportunities that lean on the application of the right to food. They study current civil and legislative dynamics on this issue. Finally, they express recommendations for the government, civil society as well as international donors, the latter being the most reluctant to the idea of applying a national strategy focused on the right to food.

In English: [The human right to food in Malawi](#)

En French: [Le droit à l'alimentation au Malawi](#)

Supreme court orders on the right to food: a tool for action - Indian right to food campaign (2005)

In 2001, the People's Union of Civil Liberties in Rajasthan issued a "writ petition" to the Indian Supreme Court to ask for the right to food to be applied. Their main argument was that the "right to life" written into the Indian Constitution implies the right to food. The proceedings are far from being finished, but the Court meetings on the subject have led it to issue interim orders. Experience has shown that these interim orders can be a useful means of action. For example, if there is a famine in a particular area, if ration shops do not receive supplies or school lunches are not served, the Court must order the State to take rapid action. The aim of the document is to provide activists and members of the public with an introduction to these interim orders, to help them use them effectively.

In English: [Supreme court orders on the right to food](#)

Websites dedicated to the right to food:

- [FAO Right to Food Portal](#) :

This website provides a wide range of information on the right to food. All FAO documents of the topic can be found with the objective to increase awareness and provide guidance, methods and instruments to assist the implementation of the right to food. The portal also offers training modules (information, implementation and capacity building) for stakeholders.

- [ESCR-Net Caselaw Database](#)

This database is a collaborative initiative by the international network for economic, social and cultural rights. The website contains examples of instances in which legal strategies have been used successfully to claim ESCR at both the international and national levels. Six of them are exclusively concerning the right to food.

- [Right to Food Campaign in India](#)

The right to food campaign is an informal network of organisations and individuals committed to the realisation of the right to food in India. The main purpose of this website is to document the campaign and to share resources for campaign activities.

- [Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative](#)

This regional initiative was launched by the FAO and governments of Brazil and Guatemala in 2005. The website allows to exchange knowledge, know-how, experience and resources that national structures achieve. [Reports](#) show the progress the right to food implementation in seven countries of the region. The website is in Spanish.

- [UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food](#)

This recent website is dedicated to the activities and publications of Olivier de Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food. Since his appointment in 2008; he has published more than a dozen of document, both official reports and informal communications. Some of them are available in different languages.

ROSA NEWS

New documents online

Food Security in Protracted Crisis: What can be done? - FAO/EU (March 2009)

This policy brief is based on the book “Beyond Relief: Food security in protracted crisis” which draws together findings from case studies available from EU/FAO website “Food Security Information for Action” (www.foodsec.org).

When emergency situations continue for years or even decades achieving food security becomes an overwhelming challenge. This policy brief aims at sharing insights, based on concrete evidence

from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and the Sudan, on what might be done to improve food security in these situations.

In English: [Food security in protracted crises](#)

In French: [Sécurité alimentaire dans un contexte de crise prolongée](#)

An introduction to the basic concepts of food security - FAO/EU (March 2009)

This note written by the FAO and the European Union is a synthesis of the key concepts of food security. The introduction gives the definition of the four pillars, and then the notions of duration and severity of food insecurity and vulnerability are explained.

In English: [An introduction to the basic concepts of food security](#)

In French: [Introduction aux concepts de la sécurité alimentaire](#)

Crop prospects and food situation - GIEWS (February 2009)

This quarterly bulletin issued by the FAO draws up the last prospects on the food production for 2009. Early indications point to a reduction in global cereal output in 2009 from the previous year's record. In Low-Income Food-Deficit countries, prospects for the early 2009 cereal crops point to a lower output. The bulletin gives an overview of the expected agricultural and food situations in 2009 in every region of the world.

In English: [Crop prospects and food situation](#)

In French: [Perspectives de récolte et situation alimentaire](#)

Voucher-for-work concept paper. A presentation of lessons learned in ACTED's experience in Northern Uganda - ACTED (March 2009)

This document is based on the ACTED “Voucher-for-work” experience in northern Uganda, and on the conclusions of a regional workshop organised jointly with the FAO in January 2009. The report aims to be a practical guide for development practitioners dealing with the Voucher-for-Work concept. It also contributes to the current discussions on humanitarian aid via cash transfers. Lessons learned from this experience help answer the questions agencies and others are currently asking: What type of work should be funded? What is the community's role? What should people be able to buy with their vouchers? What is the donor's role?

In English: [Voucher-for-work concept paper](#)

Swimming against the tide: How developing countries are coping with the global crisis - World Bank (March 2009)

For the first time since the Second World War, the world GDP is predicted to drop in 2009. Developing countries, particularly in Asia and the East, are likely to be badly hit by the crisis. Consequently, the budgetary cuts that will have to be made will be from social policy measures, and especially from the safety nets for the most vulnerable groups. The conclusion of the report is that aid to the least developed countries must increase rather than decrease, to avoid the collapse of all the progress made to date in poverty reduction.

In English: [Swimming against the tide](#)

Comparison of hunger across states. Indian states hunger index - IFPRI/welt hunger hilfe (February 2009)

The results of the India State Hunger Index show that hunger continues on a national level, but highlights huge differences between the States. There are three dimensions to the Global Hunger Index, developed by the IFPRI in 2006 - inadequate food, child underweight and child mortality. It enables cross-country comparisons, and India ranks 66th out of 88 countries. Applying it to all Indian States underscores the differences between them. The data collected are analysed for each State in relation to of poverty, per capita income and economic growth. These observations are then used to suggest policy guidelines.

In English: [India state of hunger index](#)

External resources

Social protection in Africa - Franck Ellis, Stephen Devereux and Philip White - Elgar (February 2009)

This is a book for the general public explaining the ideas, principles and practices for effective social protection in Africa. It looks at major changes in strategies for reducing hunger and vulnerability, which have moved from emergency responses in form of food transfer to predictable cash transfers to the chronically poorest social groups.

In English: [Social protection in Africa](#)

Joint guidelines for crop and food security assessment missions - FAO/WFP (January 2009)

This guide gives basic information and practical guidelines for people taking part in FAO and WFP missions on crop and food security assessment. It describes the general objectives of assessment missions, and then gives details as when, why and how to undertake these missions. Subjects include methods of collecting information, data evaluation and analysis and the production of a standard report.

Final reports from these FAO and WFP assessment missions in Sudan, Myanmar, North Korea and Bangladesh are available on [this site](#).

In English: [Joint guidelines for crop and food security assessment missions](#)

This bulletin was written by the GRET team in charge of animating ROSA (Operational Food Security Network). It is an initiative of AIDCO E6 (thematic support for food security, rural development and environment) in collaboration with AIDCO G4 (Training and Knowledge Management). The viewpoints expressed do not in any case represent the official European Commission viewpoint.