



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# Realizing the right to adequate food to end hunger and malnutrition in all its forms



## Meeting the challenge

Human rights are universal, including the right to **adequate food**, which is critical for the enjoyment of all human rights. States have the obligation to realize this right under international law. Measures to meet this right are being adopted, including its constitutional recognition in over 45 countries.

Despite important advances, **hunger and malnutrition** persist and have even worsened in recent years. This impacts the **poor and vulnerable** most severely, reflecting **widening inequalities** across and within countries. Recent crises highlight the fragility of agrifood systems, with the world at a tipping point regarding **climate change and biodiversity loss**.

Agrifood systems must be transformed, adopting measures that are people-centred to address the root causes of hunger and **poverty**. Investing in human rights across sectors is key for more inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems to ensure an adequate standard of living for all.

## In action

FAO assists countries in realizing the right to food by providing technical assistance on **policy and legislation**, strengthening **governance and monitoring** mechanisms, developing **capacities** and **agency** of both duty-bearers and rights-holders, and promoting policy dialogue to ensure inclusive multistakeholder participation.

Since their adoption in 2004, FAO has supported the implementation of the **Right to Food Guidelines** which provide policy recommendations for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food. They help translate commitments into actions, focusing on a wide range of areas, and specifically targeting the most vulnerable.

## Looking at the evidence

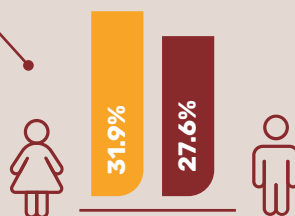
In 2020, **3.1 billion** people (42% of the world's population) could not afford a healthy diet, and rising food costs compounded the affordability gap.



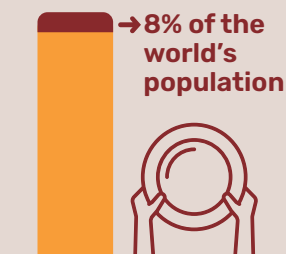
In 2020, **45 million** (6.7%) children under 5 suffered from **wasting**.



In 2021, **31.9%** of women in the world were moderately or severely **food insecure**, compared to 27.6% of men.



Without change, **670 million** people will still be facing **hunger** in **2030**.



# Comparative advantage

As the United Nations specialized agency with the mandate to end hunger and malnutrition in all its forms, strengthen food security and healthy diets, and to promote agriculture and sustainable development, FAO is the lead intergovernmental actor advocating for and supporting the realization of the right to food.

Integral to FAO's commitment to **inclusive rural transformation**, the right to food supports efforts in boosting social protection, promoting gender equality and decent work, and ensuring inclusive climate action and tenure policies.

With a presence in more than 130 countries, FAO actively engages with local partners and provides a **neutral platform** for constructive dialogue, while generating **evidence** and data for policy design and implementation.

FAO supports countries by enhancing **awareness of their human rights commitments**, strengthening inclusive policy and legislative processes so that **no one is left behind**. As actors seek greater environmental, social and economic accountability, they rely on FAO's unique **normative and technical** expertise to make a difference.

“ We need to re-think how we see and value food – not simply as a commodity to be traded, but as a right that every person shares. ”

**António Guterres**  
*Secretary-General of the United Nations*

## Best practices and results

- 1 FAO generates knowledge products and strengthens country capacities to support the implementation of the Right to Food Guidelines, such as **analytical and normative tools** that offer guidance and hands-on advice on the practical aspects of the right to food, as well as **e-learning courses** and **policy briefs**.
- 2 FAO facilitates inclusive processes for legislative, policy and strategic plans and programmes in multiple countries across all regions, including most recently in **Nepal, Fiji, Uganda** and **El Salvador**.
- 3 FAO assists in strengthening and building multi-stakeholder platforms for the right to food, collaborating with **parliamentary alliances, consumer organizations** and **academics** globally.

## Expected results

FAO will support countries to translate their international commitments into concrete actions, which establish the conditions for everyone to enjoy an adequate standard of living, including the ability to access safe, sufficient and nutritious food at all times. This will accelerate progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and realizing all human rights. In particular, FAO's work on the right to food will aim to:

- **Strengthen the capacity of state actors** to know and meet their human rights obligations, as well as **all agrifood systems' actors** to contribute to the realization of the right to adequate food, building the agency of those in the most vulnerable situations.
- **Enhance implementation of the right to adequate food** through policies and legislation, facilitating improved monitoring and accountability systems.
- **Boost policy coherence** between the Right to Food Guidelines and subsequent Committee on World Food Security (CFS) tools.

### Contact

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## Contribution to the SDGs



## Partnerships to scale up impact

- government agencies for development cooperation,
- the United Nations system (the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, CFS);
- academia and research organizations;
- ministries, including agriculture, development cooperation, foreign affairs, finance, environment, justice and internal affairs;
- parliamentarians;
- civil society organizations, Indigenous Peoples and consumer organizations; and
- the private sector.



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