

Abstract:

Right to Food and Nutrition Watch

The World Food Crisis and the Human Right to Food
Zero Issue: Published in October 2008

Ever since the beginning of 2008, the World Food Crisis has attracted global attention. Due to the fact that the international prices of all major food commodities reached their highest levels in nearly 30 years within the first three months of 2008, the World Food Crisis has mainly been characterized as a crisis of soaring food prices. Several causes, such as low levels of world stocks, crop failures in major producing countries, growing demand for the production of agrofuels, increasing consumption in China and India etc., are given as reasons to explain this development. However, this understanding of the World Food Crisis only offers a partial explanation and disregards the root causes.

The World Food Crisis is a human rights crisis and the proposed solutions to the crisis, such as the expansion of market-led globalization and the promotion of intensive monoculture-based agriculture, have failed to adequately address the problem and have led to an alarming number of chronically hungry people around the globe. The real reasons for the crisis are the national and international policies that fail to take into account the human rights obligations of states and intergovernmental organizations. The World Food Crisis is a clear demonstration of systematic violations of the right to food, as enshrined in international human rights law.

Adequate monitoring of the right to food means going beyond merely monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of government action with regard to food security. Truly comprehensive monitoring should be based on human rights and should be directed at reviewing states' reactions to hunger and malnutrition.

There is currently no international publication that monitors the concept of food as a human right and keeps track of patterns of right to food violations while also monitoring their impact. The Right to Food and Nutrition Watch is therefore the first publication of its kind as it provides a systematic compilation of best practices for the realization of the right to food and also documents where violations have been committed.

The Zero Issue of the Right to Food and Nutrition Watch deals with the topic "The World Food Crisis and the Human Right to Food" and gathers articles and country monitoring reports from different experts and regions (the Americas, Asia, Africa and India). The publication also discusses the most recent global trends affecting the right to food, such as the increased expansion of agrofuels, and sheds new light on practices that continue to impede the realization of the right to food, such as mining and the mismanagement of social cash transfers. UN experts on human rights and the right to food also give their input on recent UN documents and sessions. The Right to Food and Nutrition Watch is accompanied by a CD-ROM that includes supporting documents and full reports of all content.

A look into the content of the 2008 Zero Issue:

1. The World Doesn't Need More of the Same Medicine (Joint Declaration of Social Movements and Civil Society Organizations)
2. Small Farmers Feed the World. Industrial Agrofuels Fuel Hunger and Poverty (Position

Paper by Via Campesina)

3. The Right to Food and Voluntary Guidelines and the Launch of the African Network for the Promotion of the Right to Food (Result of a Regional Workshop held in Benin, July 2008)
4. The Impact of Agrofuels from a Right to Food Perspective by Sofia Monsalve
5. The Right to Food and the Future of the FAO by Michael Windführ
6. Prescribed Starvation Diet- Liberalization Violates the Right to Food of Paddy Farmer by Armin Paasch
7. Infant Feeding and the Right to Food by Penny van Esterik
8. Statement of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier de Schutter, 8th Session of the Human Rights Council, Geneva, 6 June 2008
9. Address by Ms. Louise Arbour, Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 7th Special Session of the Human Rights Council, Geneva, 22 May 2008
10. The Negative Impact of the Worsening of the World Food Crisis on the Realization of the Right to Food for All (Resolution 7th Special Session of the Human Rights Council)
11. Promotion and Protection of all Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Including the Right to Development (Report of the Former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Jean Ziegler, 7th Session of the Human Rights Council, 10 January 2008)
12. Methods to Monitor States' Compliance with the Right to Adequate Food by Martin Wolpold-Bosien
13. Ghana /Human Rights Violations in the Context of Large-Scale Mining Operations (Universal Periodic Review: May 2008)
14. Uganda / Monitoring the Human Right to Food
15. Malawi / Working Toward Framework Legislation: The Right to Food by Carole Samdup
16. Zambia / A Human Rights View of Social Cash Transfers for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals
17. India- Parallel Report: The Right to Adequate Food
18. Philippines- Parallel Report: The Right to Food
19. Bolivia Civil Society Report on the Realization of the Human Right to Food
20. Brazil- Fact-Finding Mission Report on the Impacts of the Agrofuel Expansion on the Enjoyment of Social Rights of Rural Workers, Indigenous Peoples and Peasants
21. Colombia- Report on the Right to Food: Situation, Context and Gaps
22. Haiti- The Human Right to Food by Carole Samdup
23. Regional Report- Agrofuels and the Human Right to Food in Latin America Reality and Threats

The Right to Food and Nutrition Watch will put pressure on policy makers at the national and international level to take the human right to food into account and place it as a priority in their agenda. It will act as a tool to best inform policymakers' decisions regarding the right to food. Human rights experts, civil society activists, social movements, media and scholars have contributed to the Zero Issue of the Right to Food and Nutrition Watch and all future issues will be an open and collaborative process where anyone interested in promoting the realization of the right to food will be invited to join.

The *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch* was published by the publishing alliance of Bread for the World, ICCO and FIAN. Other partners of the Right to Food and Nutrition Watch Consortium are Habitat International Coalition, Peoples' Health Movement, World Alliance on Breastfeeding Action and OMCT (World Organization Against Torture). Rights and Democracy and Act International further supported the launch of this pioneering publication.