



Framing Nutrition Policies and Action through Governance based on Human Rights Norms and Principles

*Achievements, Progress and
Priorities ahead*

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Why should nutrition governance be based on human rights?

- ❑ Failures of past policy choices and corresponding governance to eradicate food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition in all forms;
- ❑ The Millennium Development Goals will not be reached with the present pace and models;
- ❑ Need for “a new deal” in addressing food security and public health related nutrition concerns!



Human rights and good governance: A mutually reinforcing dichotomy

- *Human rights*: a set of universal moral principles expressed through international legal norms - applying to all human beings without discrimination of any kind!
- *Good Governance*: the process whereby public institutions adequately conduct public affairs, manage public resources *and* guarantee the realization of human rights.



Overall human rights principles for development

- Participation
- Accountability
- Non-discrimination
- Transparency
- Human dignity
- Empowerment
- Rule of law

Acronym: PANTHER!



Particularly nutrition-relevant rights in international conventions

- The right to an adequate standard of living
 - The right to adequate food
 - The right to be free from hunger
 - The right to adequate housing
- The right to the highest attainable health
- The right to clean water
- The right to care
- The right to education
- The right to work
- The right to social security



Achievements (1)

RtF *normative content* established:

- General Comment no. 12 on the right to adequate food

UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1999

- Right to Food Guidelines

FAO Member States/ endorsed by FAO Council, 2004



Dietary and nutritional aspects prominent in both

- General Comment 12:

 - Defines an "adequate diet" as including, but going beyond energy and nutrient quality;

- Right to Food Guideline No.10 - Nutrition:

 - Takes account of all dimensions relevant to human nutrition including, but going beyond 'adequate food'.



Achievements (2)

RtF – GG *linkages* established.

“States should ...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.”

Right to Food Guidelines Para. 1.3



Progress in real life?

- More States are showing interest in economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to adequate food
- Civil society increasingly promote human rights principles to guide development;
- Demands on governments' accountability from civil movements and organisations are critical for full commitment to HR and to good governance!



Progress UN: mixed records

- UNICEF: pioneering on human rights based nutrition programming from the 1980s – but what now?
- UNDP: has been a pioneer in linking human rights and good governance
- FAO: Very active in operationalising right to adequate food following the two world food summits (1996 and 2002); will have Right to Food as a strategic objective from 2010!
- WHO: Modest initiatives on health as a human right
- World Bank: remains to be seen , if ever...
- SCN: growing focus human rights from mid-1990s triggered by its Working Group on *Nutrition, Ethics and Human Rights*
- UN High Commissioner for HR: strong promotion of the RtF
- UN Special Rapporteur on RtF: perhaps the single-most important institution now besides FAO!



Signs of progress in the international nutrition community

- 5th Report on the World Nutrition Situation (SCN, 2004) brought rights-based nutrition governance to the fore; will be followed up in 6th Report (forthcoming 2009);
- The current IUNS Congress programme now features human rights and nutrition governance as intrinsic dimensions in current nutrition thinking!
- But: Academia at large has not yet picked up substantially on HR/NRR/RtF – this should be changed.



Priorities ahead?

Two overriding, related questions:

- Are government institutions that frame or affect nutrition policies willing to apply human rights principles as the foundation of their governance?
- If yes, are they sufficiently prepared for and able to do so?



Overriding priorities now

- Urgently promote *universal understanding* of human rights principles and corresponding good governance for human-centered development!
- Systematically increase *capacity* to work with human rights based governance for food security and nutritional health and wellbeing!
- *Academia* has a particular responsibility to train leaders in human rights as a foundation for a new nutrition governance!