

## The Right to Food and Nutrition Security

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The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has the physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement. (General Comment 12-UN CESCR)

### Background

The right to food is globally recognized and affirmed by United Nations Member states to ensure all citizens have equal access to adequate food and nutrition without any discrimination at any time and this to be reflected at national legal frameworks. The primary concept of the right to food infer that everyone must have access to adequate food physically and economically all the time and the capability to procure the food. No restriction and discrimination accepted at all.

United nations have set Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for the prosperity of all human being around the world and the Goal# 1,2 and 3 emphasize on *No Poverty, Zero Hunger, health and wellbeing*. There is a systematic chain of relationship between 17 Goals stipulated in the SDG which pursue state members in taking concrete necessary measures to tackle the hunger and poverty under their territories.

Statistic shows still 793 million people are suffering from chronic hunger and malnourishment. Therefore, to come over such global challenges a cohesive and comprehensive approach is required to guarantee access to fair resources, increase employment opportunities and increase income to combat food insecurity and malnourishment.

State members must focus on food governance system, investment on agriculture, rural economy, and increase social protection mechanism, education, health, small enterprises and food [2] productivity at all level. It's a universal common goal to eradicate extreme hunger and malnourishment.

### Right and obligation

Majority of UN state members have ratified international covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) with emphasizing on full progressive realization the right to food and food security. Heads of states in the Rome Declaration have 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*". in the international summits on food security, action plans have been adopted to encourage countries to ensure everyone have access to adequate food and recognize it's a fundamental rights to each individual to be free from hunger as prime responsibility of the UN state members from human rights based approach perspective.

Based on food summit and its action plan the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has increased its utmost efforts along with relevant UN treaty bodies in compatibility with article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to support state members to come up with an appropriate mechanism and plan to address the food challenges and malnutrition.

The world has been witnessing food insecurity and extreme poverty for years. Reports indicate despite of major achievements in decreasing 11% hunger in 2014-2016 compare to 18.6% in 1990-1992, but still 793 million people in the world suffer from hunger and lack food adequacy. In order to realize that the right to food and nutrition security is practices, its crucial to ensure that every child, girls, women and men in the community has economic and physical access all the time and the means for procurement. It's not a moral responsibility, it's more legally binding obligation to state members to take actions and policy related measures. Not even policy related measures is important each state members has to adopt national action plan and strategy to ensure the right to food and nutrition security through a systematic N&E mechanism by involving private sector and food scientists to address challenges accordingly. [3]

The World Food Program global report published in 2017 indicate: *"around 124 million people in 51 countries faced Crisis food insecurity or worse1. Last year's global report on Food Crises identified 108 million people across 48 countries in 2016. A comparison of the 45 countries included in both global reports reveals an increase of 11 million people or 11 percent in the number of food-insecure people across the world. This rise can largely be attributed to new or intensified conflict and insecurity in countries such as Yemen, (northern) Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Myanmar. Persistent drought also played a major role, causing consecutively poor harvests in countries"* (Quote) 1 global report on food crises 2018(WFP -FSIN)

### International treaties and the right to food

The progressive realization of the right to adequate food requires States to fulfil their relevant human rights obligations under international law. States have obligations under relevant international instruments in connection 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 measures in practices. All 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 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. [4]

### Afghanistan food security status

It's located in central Asia with neighboring countries of China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran and Pakistan with the area of 652,864[5] km<sup>2</sup> (252,072 sq mi) (40<sup>th</sup>) with estimated population 34,656,032 (40<sup>th</sup>) in 2016, with density 49.88/km<sup>2</sup> (129.2/sq mi) (150<sup>th</sup>) with GDP rate 10.52 and \$1,888 per Capital. Food insecurity reaches to 9.3 million and children under 5, stunned to 41%.

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/471191495626000119/pdf/115229-REVISED-PUBLIC-AFG-Development-Update-Spring-2017-final.pdf>

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/667181493794491292/pdf/114741-WP-v1-P159553-PUBLIC.pdf>

Decades of war, civil unrest and natural disasters have taken a huge toll on Afghanistan. Despite recent progress, millions of Afghans still live in severe poverty, with a crumbling infrastructure and landscape suffering from environmental damage.

Around 39.1 percent of Afghans live below the poverty line<sup>3</sup>, with huge differences in living standards between those living in cities and those in rural areas. The country has some of the world's highest infant, child and maternal mortality rates, and many thousands of

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children die needlessly each year because they lack access to adequate food and nutrition. Around 41 percent of Afghan children under the age of five are stunted, with low height for their age, while 10 percent are acutely malnourished.

Around 33 percent of Afghans are food insecure – around 9.3 million people – and some 3.4 million of them are severely food insecure. Unemployment is high and economic growth slow, with gender-based violence and access to healthcare and education adding further problems. What's more, Afghanistan is prone to recurring natural disasters including flooding, earthquakes, avalanches, landslides and droughts, with such disasters affecting 250,000 people every year. Physical security is a major concern, and insurgent activity and military operations continue to affect food security in some areas. Along with other issues such as illegal logging, uncontrolled grazing and deforestation, this undermines humanitarian efforts. Nearly 750,000 conflict-affected people required humanitarian food assistance in 2016. 5

The UN strategic review of 2017 reclassified Afghanistan from a post conflict country to one in active conflict. After four decades of conflict, the country faces huge economic and development challenges which cannot be remedied by humanitarian aid. An estimated 10 million people have limited or no access to essential health services, 3.5 million children are out of school and infant mortality rates are among the highest in the world. The humanitarian community has identified 8.7 million people with chronic needs who require longer-term systemic interventions.

### Factors driving acute food insecurity

Food insecurity in Afghanistan is on the rise with widespread acute and chronic food needs as a result of multiple drivers, including conflict, cross-border population movement, and climate change. The 2017 integrated food security phase classification exercise has assessed 1.9 million people in Phase 4 (emergency), 5.6 million in Phase 3 (crisis), and nearly 10 million in Phase 2 (stressed) levels of food insecurity. According to the recent seasonal food security assessment<sup>4</sup> (SFSA), nearly half of the population has also experienced some kind of shock, affecting their ability to feed their families. These include loss of employment (27%) and reduced income (13%). Natural disasters such as floods, localized drought, and pest attacks in 2017 have affected crop and livestock production in various parts of the country.

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/post20harvest20sfsa20201720report20by20fsac.pdf>

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