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Press Release



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
FOR HOME ECONOMICS

WORLD FOOD DAY 2007: The Right to Food

Bonn, 1st October 2007

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations celebrates World Food Day each year on 16 October, the day on which the Organization was founded in 1945.



The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) is an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO), having consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC, FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF) and with the Council of Europe. IFHE supports the celebrations of World Food Day 2007:

“The Right to Food”

The right to food was formally recognized in the very first international human rights document, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948 and was further elaborated in 1999 with the General Comment 12 by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It states that the right to 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“. What does the right to food mean? The right to food is a birthright; a person does not have to do anything to deserve it. But it is not the right to ask for free food: people are responsible for doing all they can to realize their own right to food.

The right to food means that every person – woman, man and child – must have access at all times to food, or to means for the procurement of food, that is sufficient in quality, quantity and variety to meet their needs, is free from harmful substances and is acceptable to their culture. Only when individuals do not have the capacity to meet their food needs by their own means for reasons beyond their control, such as age, disability, economic hardship, famine, disaster, or discrimination, will they be entitled to receive food directly from the state.

By recognizing the Right to Food, governments have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil this right.

The Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security – the Right to Food Guidelines – were adopted by the FAO Council in 2004 and provide practical recommendations for the implementation of the right to food.

The Right to Food Guidelines are a practical tool to assist countries in their efforts to eradicate hunger. The guidelines are a set of coherent recommendations on, among others, labour, land, water, genetic resources, sustainability, safety nets, education, and global influences. They also encourage the allocation of budgetary resources to anti-hunger and poverty programmes.

But not only governments but also individuals and civil society organizations, NGOs and the private sector – have responsibilities with regard to the Right to Food.

As the only worldwide Home Economics organisation IFHE supports the right to food with its international work. The IFHE is willing to make a contribution to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, especially the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. IFHE members all over the world are working on strategies to eradicate hunger and poverty and to ensure the access to healthy food for every person. Food security is one of the important themes in the practice and research of Home Economists.

IFHE aims for the improvement of the quality of everyday life for individuals, families and households through the management of their resources and considering the aims of sustainable development. Mental, physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing is the basic infrastructure for all other forms of social and economic development.

The progressive implementation of the right to food addresses eradicating hunger and poverty, and hastening and deepening the sustainable development process.

”The right to food is not unrealistic. It can be realized for all. Some countries are on the way to doing this, but everyone should contribute to make this happen”, Barbara Ekwall, Coordinator of the Right to Food Unit.