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# Gender, Nutrition, and the Human Right to Adequate Food: Toward an Inclusive Framework

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**When so many call for inclusion of women and a gender perspective in food security, why is the status of women and girls still not improving?**

# Gender, Nutrition, and the Human Right to Adequate Food:

## TOWARD AN INCLUSIVE FRAMEWORK

A joint project of

Syracuse University & Hohenheim University  
FIAN International

Geneva Infant Feeding Association (GIFA)/IBFAN

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Presented by

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## ■ Toward an Inclusive Framework

I. Two Disconnects

II. Five Points to Address the Disconnects

III. Next Steps



## ■ **Disconnect #1: Separation *instead of* Interrelatedness of human rights**

- ❖ **The human right to adequate food and nutrition (ICESCR)**
- ❖ **Women's rights (CEDAW)**
- ❖ **Children's rights (CRC)**
- ❖ **Others....**

**Need holistic approach** to legal obligations, institutional organization, programmatic delivery, research agendas



## ■ **Disconnect #2: Separation *instead of* Integration of food and nutrition**

- ❖ **FAO-Addressing food? Increase food production.**
  - ❖ **Policy: promote agro-food commodity sectors**
  - ❖ **Result: ignores local culture/sovereignty**
  - ❖ **Result: ignores women's participation/autonomy**
- ❖ **UNICEF&WHO-Addressing malnutrition? Medicalize.**
  - ❖ **Policy: promote pharmaceutical sector**
  - ❖ **Result: ignores local culture/sovereignty**
  - ❖ **Result: ignores women's participation/autonomy**



## Addressing the Disconnects

### 1. Structural separation & legal isolation of HRs

- ❖ **Coordinate the food and nutrition objectives of the ICESCR, CEDAW, and CRC to benefit women, children and men.**
  - ❖ **Avoid stereotyping women as mothers and wives**
  - ❖ **Address inconsistency in attention to nutrition.**
- ❖ **Maintain human rights framework (HRF) and objective of holding governments accountable**
  - ❖ **Beware of MDGs/SDBs & PPPs that do not use HRF**



## Addressing the Disconnects

### 2. Violence against women and girls

- ❖ From direct/aggressive to structural forms, **violence is an under-examined barrier to women's right to adequate food and to their participation** as autonomous and participatory members of efforts to address hunger and food insecurity

***Structural violence*** is a process aligned with social injustice that ***“is built into [social] structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances.”*** (Galtung 1969)



## Addressing the Disconnects

### 3. Maternal-child food, nutrition and health

- ❖ Address **intertwined subjectivities** in maternal-child RtAFN
- ❖ Address malnutrition a) **across life cycle** as HR deprivation; b) as **inter-generational** cause of hunger, poverty, growth failure.
- ❖ **Local and sustainable interventions**, e.g., breastfeeding, appropriate complementary feeding, reproductive rights & health, enhancement of/access to local & regional food.
- ❖ Avoid nutrition interventions: a) with conflicts of interests, b) prioritizing short term, medicalized and locally non-sustainable solutions, c) threatening **women's and community's human right to dignity and self-determination**.





## Addressing the Disconnects

### 4. Food systems, gender & participation

- ❖ **Emphasize more localized, sustainable, and smaller-scaled food and nutrition systems incl agro-ecology.**
- ❖ **Democratize food governance at diverse scales.**
- ❖ **Support local knowledge (cf.: IAASTD; FAO RtF Guidelines 2004/5; food sovereignty movements).**
- ❖ **Address men and masculinity in the food system.**
- ❖ **Mainstream women in all above, recognizing and addressing the barriers and challenges they face.**



## Addressing the Disconnects

### 5. Applying human rights perspectives and tools

- ❖ Hold governments accountable to human rights. HRtAFN is not about the right of access to commodities: rice, potatoes or industrialized micronutrients.
- ❖ HRtAFN is about human beings organizing themselves to feed themselves in harmony with nature, in the ways they see most fit, and guarantee the right of every human being to achieve her/his well being and human potential.
- ❖ HRtAFN must fully incorporate: popular and food sovereignty, self determination, women's rights, protection against violence, and nutrition.



## Next Steps in HRtAFN **Institutions** & Struggles

- ❖ Harmonize HRtAFN legal sources (nutrition & gender)
- ❖ Coordinate UN HR bodies with HRtAFN, nutrition and gender competences: HRC, treaty bodies, special procedures, specialized agencies, intergovernmental instances, OHCHR.
- ❖ **Need evolution of a systematic interpretation of sources and application by institutions:** Comprehensive CESCR General Comment, CEDAW General Recommendation, CRC General Comment. For example: addressing ETOs with coordination and participation.



## **Next Steps in HRtAFN Institutions & Struggles**

- ❖ **In the US: a) integrate RtAFN with other HR efforts esp addressing race and most marginalized/violated; b) nat'l food plan; b) ratification ICESCR, CEDAW, CRC, etc.**
- ❖ **Redefine private sector**
- ❖ **Recourse mechanisms (accessible, affordable)**
- ❖ **Treaty Alliance**
- ❖ **Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)**
- ❖ **Extraterritorial Obligations (ETOs)**
- ❖ **Convention on the rights of peasants; right to land**
- ❖ **UN protocol on conflicts of interests and PPPs**



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## Next Steps in HRtAFN Institutions & Struggles

### ❖ Treaty Alliance: July 2015

GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR A BINDING TREATY

MOVIMENTO GLOBAL POR UN TRATADO VINCULANTE

An alliance of committed networks and campaign groups around the world are joining to collectively help organise advocacy activities in support of **developing a binding international instrument to address corporate human rights abuses**. Some of the groups involved include: CETIM, CIDSE, Dismantle Corporate Power Campaign, ESCR-NET, FIAN, FIDH, Franciscans International, Friends of the Earth, IBFAN-GIFA, Indonesia Global Justice, International Commission of Jurists, Legal Resources Center, PAN AP, Transnational Institute, TUCA

<http://www.treatymovement.com/>



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**Thank you**

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