



Federal Ministry  
of Food  
and Agriculture



Background Paper

# Policies against Hunger Conference

23 to 25 June 2025, Berlin

# From Rights to Action! The Right to Food as a Compass for Resilient Food Systems

The human right to adequate food is an essential cornerstone of resilient food systems. Over the past two decades, governments, parliaments, courts, international organisations and social actors at local and national levels have implemented human rights-based measures and have thus been able to make great strides in safeguarding food security.

These approaches are preferable to others, especially in the face of the current geopolitical, security policy and climate-related challenges. They create resilient structures by involving local people in decision-making, strengthening their individual rights such as access to water and land, thereby making a key contribution to sustainable food systems. The human right to food places obligations on states and makes clear that they are directly responsible and that the implementation of their human rights obligations can be monitored – by the states themselves, by civil society, by courts and by UN monitoring bodies.

The United Nations Committee on World Food Security (CFS) plays a central role in this respect with its “Guidelines on the Right to Food”, which have now marked their 20th anniversary, and to whose implementation the last “Policies against Hunger” Conference was dedicated. Since 2004, these guidelines have given rise to important policy recommendations and guidelines on land, fisheries and forestry tenure, water and food security, agroecology, social protection policies, access to markets, gender equality, conflicts and ongoing crises. At the same time, other thematically relevant instruments have emerged under the United Nations’ human rights protection system, such as the UN Declarations on the rights of peasants (2018) or on the rights of indigenous peoples (2007).

In spite of this progress, however, human rights approaches are under pressure around the world, with around 733 million people currently starving and approx. 2.8 billion people malnourished. In

the countries of the Global North, many people are affected by food poverty. This clearly shows that there is still a great deal to be done in terms of implementing and accepting the instruments, especially in view of the multiple crises.

## Objective of the conference: From rights to action!

In order to move from knowledge to action on the right to food, we need examples and models that illustrate in a convincing manner that the human-rights based approach works, and how it works. The 2025 “Policies against Hunger” Conference is therefore intended to use key issues to deepen last year’s discussion on the realisation of the right to food, whilst empowering relevant actors and gaining new partners. Specific practical examples will be used to evaluate what factors for success and what obstacles exist on the path towards realising the right to food. From this, recommendations for action are to be derived and incorporated into the debates at key international and national forums.

The conference follows on from significant global developments in 2024/25 and will develop new contributions on:

- the far-reaching CFS resolutions and multi-year programme of work, including the CFS Action Plan to strengthen the uptake of CFS policy agreements (CFS Uptake);
- the initiatives launched for enhanced cooperation between FAO, IFAD, WFP and the Geneva human rights bodies on the right to food;
- the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty (GAHP) initiated by the G20 Presidency of Brazil and the G20 Initiative on Bioeconomy (GIB);
- South Africa’s G20 Presidency in 2025, including the continuation of the GIB;



- the BMEL's Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) on bioeconomy held in Berlin in 2025;
- the United Food Systems Summit (UNFSS)+4 Stocktaking Moment in Addis Ababa on 28 - 30 July 2025;
- the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Brazil in 2025;
- the 2026 International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD+20) in Colombia, especially with regard to the VGGT (see below) and,
- the Hamburg Sustainability Conference on 2 - 3 June.

## Priority issues of the conference:

In light of the above, we want to use the BMEL's international conference to address the following priority issues with international and national stakeholders, with politics, industry, science and civil society in participatory and interactive formats:

### 1. Access to land

What human rights-based instruments and policy approaches have proven effective and should be used to a greater extent? International instruments such as the CFS Guidelines on Land Tenure Governance (VGGT), General Comment no 26 of the UN Social Committee, the UN Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Rights of Peasants (UNDROP) provide a human rights-based framework. What are the challenges arising in the implementation of these, and what role does land play in the Climate Change Conference (COP 30)? What impetus should be given to the 2026 ICARRD+20 in Colombia?

### 2. Empowering women and girls

How can the rights of women and girls be strengthened, thus overcoming one of the main structural causes of food insecurity? How can these groups be guaranteed equitable access to natural resources, such as soil, water and biodiversity? What experiences and instruments are key in this respect, and how can they be more

fully implemented? The Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls Empowerment, developed by the CFS and adopted in 2023, have brought the issue back into the spotlight of international food and nutrition policies. General Recommendation no. 34 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) focuses on the rights of rural women. What positive examples from national practice can now inform the enhanced implementation? What obstacles can be overcome and how? How can new co-operation be arranged in order to press ahead with gender equality in national and global contexts? The conference will thus also provide recommendations for action and develop networking activities for the UN International Year of the Woman Farmer in 2026.

### 3. Bioeconomy as an instrument for ensuring food security

The bioeconomy brings with it diverse opportunities for improving food security, increasing prosperity, establishing regional supply chains, creating value in rural areas and enhancing climate action through decarbonisation, but it also poses challenges. The "Policies against Hunger" Conference will discuss what conditions are needed for the bioeconomy to be able to help strengthen the right to food and improve local food security. What positive examples are there, and what conditions are needed to this end? The Agriculture Ministers who gathered at the 2025 GFFA welcomed Germany's proposal for the FAO to launch a project, funded by Germany, to develop a Global Bioeconomy Partnership and, with the involvement of all stakeholders, to define its terms of reference and governance framework. The conference will develop recommendations for this purpose.

### 4. Sustainable and responsible agricultural supply chains

How can regional and global value chains in the agri-food sector be designed to protect the right to food, especially in times of climate crisis and ever scarcer natural resources, and to meet the requirements for sustainable climate-smart

development? International instruments such as the OECD-FAO Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains provide specific guidance for action. Based on positive examples of sustainable agricultural supply chains, the aim will be to identify success factors and obstacles and to answer the question as to what measures should be strengthened to ensure that human rights in agricultural supply chains are respected? It will also be discussed what influence new unilateral regimes, particularly those of the EU, will have on the right to food. What role can certification schemes such as the Food Security Standard (FSS) play? Recommendations for industry will then be derived from this.

## **5. Human right to food in the countries of the Global North**

In the face of food poverty, which also exists in the Global North, the question arises: How can the right to food be better protected there as well? In recent years, initiatives to overcome food poverty have increasingly been launched in Germany and other countries of the Global North as well. Increased costs of living and a higher demand for food donations and charitable food distribution systems such as food banks, have raised public awareness of the urgency of the issue. People affected by poverty speak of a lack of social participation and science is highlighting growing inequalities. Studies show that people living in poverty are more often affected by diet-related illnesses. What practical examples and forward-looking suggestions are there for improving the protection of the right to food in the Global North and for human rights-based policy approaches to overcome food poverty? How has the exchange with other food security and nutrition councils around the globe, such as the Brazilian CONSEA, proven useful? What contribution can the German food policy councils make?