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PERIODIC REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Reports on economic, social and cultural rights, for the period  
1 July 1969-30 June 1973, received from specialized agencies  
under Economic and Social Council resolution 1074 C (XXXIX)

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

/30 April 1974/

I. FAO is engaged in making a wide-ranging contribution to the promotion of human rights by the mandate assigned to it by the member Nations in the preamble to the FAO constitution. 1/ This is further elaborated on in article I. 2/

1/ "The Nations accepting this Constitution, being determined to promote the common welfare by furthering separate and collective action on their part for the purpose of:

"raising levels of nutrition and standards of living of the peoples under their respective jurisdictions;

"securing improvements in the efficiency of the production and distribution of all food and agricultural products;

"bettering the condition of rural populations;

"and thus contributing toward and expanding world economy and ensuring humanity's freedom from hunger;

hereby establish the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, hereinafter referred to as the Organization, through which the Members will report to one another on the measures taken and the progress achieved in the field of action set forth above."

2/ Foot-note on following page.)

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2/ (Foot-note from previous page.)

Article I - Functions of the Organization

"1. The Organization shall collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate information relating to nutrition, food and agriculture. In this Constitution, the term agriculture and its derivatives include fisheries, marine products, forestry and primary forestry products.

"2. The Organization shall promote and, where appropriate, shall recommend national and international action with respect to:

- "(a) scientific, technological, social and economic research relating to nutrition, food and agriculture;
- "(b) the improvement of education and administration relating to nutrition, food and agriculture, and the spread of public knowledge of nutritional and agricultural science and practice;
- "(c) the conservation of natural resources and the adoption of improved methods of agricultural production;
- "(d) the improvement of the processing, marketing and distribution of food and agricultural production;
- "(e) the adoption of policies for the provision of adequate agricultural credit, national and international;
- "(f) the adoption of international policies with respect to agricultural commodity arrangements.

"3. It shall also be the function of the Organization:

- "(a) to furnish such technical assistance as governments may request;
- "(b) to organize, in cooperation with the governments concerned, such missions as may be needed to assist them to fulfil the obligation arising from their acceptance of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture and of this Constitution; and
- "(c) generally to take all necessary and appropriate action to implement the purposes of the Organization as set forth in the Preamble."

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The main areas of work to which the specific efforts of the Organization relating to human rights are directed, are: agrarian reform, rural employment, food production, nutrition and general improvement of rural living conditions through technical training, education and extension. Over the last five years, an increasing emphasis has been placed by the member Governments on the establishment of programmes aimed toward integrated rural development, agrarian reform, sociological analysis of applied research, demonstration projects and planning for better family living, ecological considerations concerning environment, youth programmes, the improvement of the social participation of women, programmes directed to family welfare and the needs of rural families related to all aspects of home and family for the improvement of living standards, the problem of agricultural development in its world perspective, employment problems in the rural areas with the unprecedentedly high rate of population growth, and space technology with the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The global approach to these general policies of economic and social development are reflected in the specific programmes of the divisions of the Organization.

II. In the two biennia covering this consideration of FAO's contribution to human rights, the work of FAO has greatly expanded through the availability of extra-budgetary funding which has stimulated the expansion of the field programmes. Attention is invited to FAO's reports for the period in question submitted annually to the summer sessions of the Economic and Social Council. These provide a fairly comprehensive account of our Regular Programme as well as field activities.

The Organization has attempted to provide a wider framework in agricultural development problems and a consideration of the needs and rights of the rural people involved through its "Indicative world plan for agricultural development 1969". In this study and the subsequent strategy, developed under major areas of concentration, the programmes under "Mobilization of human resources" are particularly relevant.

All of these efforts illustrate FAO's concern for the human rights of rural people through dissemination of assistance on matters of food and nutrition, adequate access to the knowledge and means of improved production, the attainment of adequate income and employment, assistance in achieving public and social services essential for the well-being of the individual, education and training for all members of the family from village level to university.

In collaboration with other United Nations agencies and through its own production, education, food planning and policy programmes, the Organization continually attempts to assist member Governments in their effort to create a greater international understanding of the problems of food supplies and needs, the importance and means of better nutrition with special emphasis on the vulnerable groups such as expectant and nursing mothers, young children, the poor and the unemployed youth. High priority is being given to guidance to member Governments on food and nutrition surveys and the development of national food and nutrition policies, the latter for inclusion into the over-all plans for agricultural and socio-economic development. In recognition that the way of life in rural areas, the farm and the home must be thought of as a unit, FAO has recognized that agricultural production is dependent on good farm homes and farm families that are

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well-nourished and healthy. To this end a vigorous programme in human resources is aimed at for improving family living standards.

Through the Action-for-Development programmes which have followed the original Freedom-from-Hunger-Campaign activities, means are provided to involve and increase the co-operation of voluntary and non-government organizations, the business community and other groups engaged in educational activities relating to agriculture and the problems of hunger, food production and general agricultural programmes to the end of giving these multinational non-governmental organizations a chance to participate in actual development projects in the developing countries. The Organization's activity is as a catalyst and broker between sponsors and recipients.

The World Food Programme, which was organized under the joint sponsorship of the United Nations and FAO, has the resources of FAO for technical guidance and expertise in assessing and developing its projects. The programme has been a major instrument for the conveyance of food donations to the recipient countries, not only from a logistics point of view, but also taking into account the food and nutrition policies and needs of the recipient Governments.

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