



SI WHERE WE STAND

FOOD SECURITY

Where Things Stand...

Food security is the situation when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious and is recognized as a basic right for all. Best available statistics, however, describe a world where the number of undernourished people continues to increase, where two billion people experience moderate or severe food insecurity, and where more than 820 million people are hungry.

Food insecurity is associated with poverty, low income, and irregular access to nutritious and sufficient food. Food security is compromised or threatened by climate change; armed conflict; population growth; inadequate water supply; over harvesting of plants, fish, and wildlife; and by destruction of wild food habitat that leads to diminished food resources.

In every continent, the prevalence rate of food insecurity is slightly higher among women than men.

...And Where Things Need to Go

Fundamental Action

Soroptimist International recognizes that the right to food and other human rights are inextricably interconnected and urges states to examine the ways and means of overcoming obstacles to the realization of the right to food. Governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, other institutions, and individuals who interact with women and girls must act to improve food security.

Additional Action

Raise Awareness of the Causes and Consequences of Food Insecurity. Obstacles to the realization of the right to food must be identified at an appropriate political boundary or regional scale, and then mitigative measures identified, evaluated, selected, and implemented. The costs of under-nourishment and hunger to individuals, households, and society must be recognized.

Provide Training and Capacity Building to Vulnerable Women and Girls. Training programs and capacity-building that target women and girls and support their roles in improving food security should give women and girls an awareness of food and good nutrition and resilience, which in turn gives women and girls the power to recognize and chose options that improve their situations and increase their ability to reduce household poverty.

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In General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council, United Nations (ECOSOC); Operational Relations with the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); Special List of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Official Relations with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO); Consultative Status with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO); Consultative Status with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).



Provide Education and Access to Decent Work. Food insecurity is disproportionately linked to domestic violence and poverty, and exacerbated food insecurity worsens the earnings and employment opportunities of women. Children and adolescents suffering from hunger and malnutrition are often more vulnerable to being recruited into the worst forms of child labor to survive (e.g., child soldiers, child prostitution). Educational programs should equip women and girls with the ability to move to new or different opportunities as circumstances change.

Conduct Research and Monitoring, Collect, and Use Disaggregated Data. Systems to collect accurate and reliable qualitative and quantitative data that are disaggregated by place, gender, age, ethnicity, language, marital status, and other descriptors that are relevant to monitoring inequalities experienced by women and girls must be developed and uniformly implemented to assist development and implementation of food system policies and when designing, monitoring, and evaluating projects that provide aid and services to women and girls.

Where Soroptimist International Stands

Soroptimist International understands that gender equality is the single most important determinant of food security. These are the principles that Soroptimist International strongly supports and will advocate for on behalf of women and girls:

- States, the private sector, and NGOs should protect the rights of women and girls including
- the right to inherit and own land. and empower women and girls to be leaders, experts, and agents of change.
- States, the private sector, and NGOs should provide for effective remedies to food insecurity and to impediments and violations of the human right to food. Food security related decisions must be made with the participation of an informed public.
- Each State should adopt a legal and institutional framework that assists those within its jurisdiction to provide for food security, including water rights, land rights, transportation systems, and food storage and distribution systems.
- States should fully implement their Paris Agreement of COP21 commitments, to prevent deterioration of human rights, including the rights to food, water, and land.

The advancement of women's rights translates into improved physical and mental development of children, whose ability to learn and to lead healthy and productive lives will gain; it translates into better health and nutritional outcome for the household, as the decision-making power within the family is rebalanced in favour of women, and it results in higher productivity for women as small-scale food producers.

Oliver De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, 24 December 2012