

Monitoring economic, social and cultural rights

Utilizing human rights indicators for state reporting in the
case of the right to adequate food

Briefing for diplomatic missions, parliamentarians and
government representatives

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Hiroshimastraße 17, 10785 Berlin
11 June 2009, 18:00 – 20:00

PROGRAMME

- 18:00 Welcome and opening remarks by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Jürgen Stetten
Head of Department, Global Policy and Development
- Opening statement by the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV)
Dietrich Guth
Director General, EU Affairs, International Affairs, Fisheries
- 18:10 Introductory presentation:
The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its work as an international human rights monitoring body
Virginia Dandan
University of the Philippines, Member of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- 18:20 The human right to adequate food: current challenges for its worldwide implementation
Olivier De Schutter
UN Special Rapporteur for the Right to Food
- 18:30 Monitoring the right to adequate food by using indicators and benchmarks: The "IBSA" initiative
Eibe Riedel
University of Mannheim, Member of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- 18:40 Germany's UN engagement for the promotion of the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation
Martin Huth
German Foreign Office, Deputy Head of Human Rights Division
- 18:50 Open round of questions and discussion
Chair: **Beate Wagner**
United Nations Association of Germany
- 20:00 Refreshments

BACKGROUND

In times of global financial and economic crisis the human right to adequate food, guaranteed by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and other international treaties and declarations, has become ever more important, as the international community approaches the first ten years of the Millennium Development Goals. If taken seriously the concept of an individual right to adequate food, along with other human rights like the right to water and sanitation, has the potential to make a strong contribution to the reduction of global poverty.

The human right to food is enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), a core element of binding international human rights law. All countries which have become a State party to this essential treaty have agreed to be held accountable by its standards and have expressed their willingness to not only progressively implement the legally binding obligations stipulated by the treaty, but also to be monitored by a treaty body – the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Committee) – in the form of a state reporting process. This monitoring process has, over many years, contributed valuably to the worldwide promotion and implementation of economic, social and cultural rights, yet still is far from reaching its true potential.

In order for the state reporting process to come closer to its potential, various initiatives have, in recent years, been looking into the possibility of utilizing **human rights indicators** and corresponding **benchmarks** to the benefit of the process. With the support of the German government, one of these initiatives has started by identifying a group of right to food indicators both manageable and comprehensive in that it captures, at least, the core minimum content of the right. In line with similar efforts by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, this initiative aims to establish the use of indicators (and benchmarking) in the state reporting exercise before the Committee – eventually with regard to all economic, social and cultural rights – leading towards a more focused dialogue between reporting States parties and the Committee that helps to simplify the reporting task and, through more efficient monitoring and more effective follow-up, to enhance the actual realization of economic, social and cultural rights on the ground.

The German government invites all diplomatic missions as well as members of the German Bundestag interested in exchanging thoughts and ideas on the international monitoring of economic, social and cultural rights to take part in an expert briefing, designed to bring together representatives from all regions of the world.