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At the World Food Summit, convened in Rome in 1996, the Heads of State and Governments requested that progress be made towards clarifying "the content of the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger" as guaranteed in Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In response, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the body of independent experts in charge of supervising compliance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted *General Comment* No. 12 on the right to food, issued in 1999. It recommended that States parties to the Covenant adopt a national strategy on the right to food, in the following terms:

21. The most appropriate ways and means of implementing the right to adequate food will inevitably vary significantly from one State party to another. Every State will have a margin of discretion in choosing its own approaches, but the Covenant clearly requires that each State party take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that everyone is free from hunger and as soon as possible can enjoy the right to adequate food. This will require the adoption of a national strategy to ensure food and nutrition security for all, based on human rights principles that define the objectives, and the formulation of policies and corresponding benchmarks. It should also identify the resources available to meet the objectives and the most cost-effective way of using them.

22. The strategy should be based on a systematic identification of policy measures and activities relevant to the situation and context, as derived from the normative content of the right to adequate food and spelled out in relation to the levels and nature of State parties' obligations referred to in paragraph 15 of the present general comment. This will facilitate coordination between ministries and regional and local authorities and ensure that related policies and administrative decisions are in compliance with the obligations under article 11 of the Covenant.

23. The formulation and implementation of national strategies for the right to food requires full compliance with the principles of accountability, transparency, people's participation, decentralization, legislative capacity and the independence of the judiciary. Good governance is essential to the realization of all human rights, including the elimination of poverty and ensuring a satisfactory livelihood for all.

24. Appropriate institutional mechanisms should be devised to secure a representative process towards the formulation of a strategy, drawing on all available domestic expertise relevant to food and nutrition. The strategy should set out the responsibilities and timeframe for the implementation of the necessary measures.

25. The strategy should address critical issues and measures in regard to all aspects of the food system, including the production, processing, distribution, marketing and consumption of safe food, as well as parallel measures in the fields of health, education, employment and social security. Care should be taken to ensure the most sustainable management and use of natural and other resources for food at the national, regional, local and household levels.

Please read also the following [excerpts \(/c4x/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/asset/_Materials_FAO_Voluntary_Guidelines_Final_.pdf\)](/c4x/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/asset/_Materials_FAO_Voluntary_Guidelines_Final_.pdf) of Guideline 3 of the *Voluntary Guidelines on the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security*, approved by the Council of the UN Organization for Food and Agriculture (FAO) on 23 November 2004. This is a quite remarkable document because, the result of a two years long negotiation, it is the first text of intergovernmental nature that clarifies the content of a social right. Guideline 3 refers specifically to the adoption of a national right to food strategy.

What would you see as the major advantages of such an approach? Further down in this subsection, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate on the added value of this tool, listing what you consider as the key benefits we can expect from the adoption of such strategies or action plans.

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