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# United Against Hunger The Right to Food Perspective

Presentation by  
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**“A [human] right is not something that somebody gives you; it is something that nobody can take away.”**

Eleanor Roosevelt

**“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”**

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

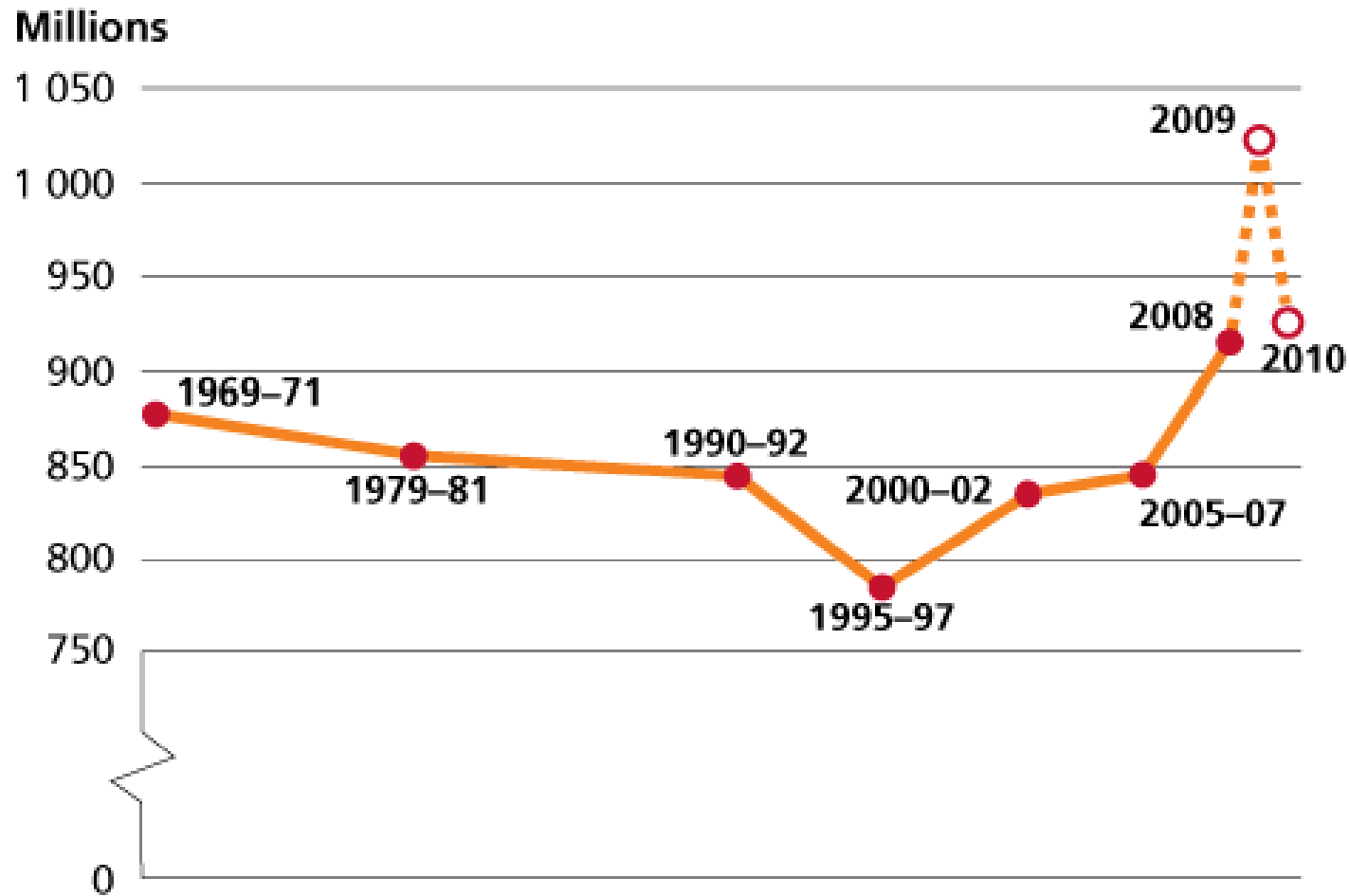
## Whose Right to Food?

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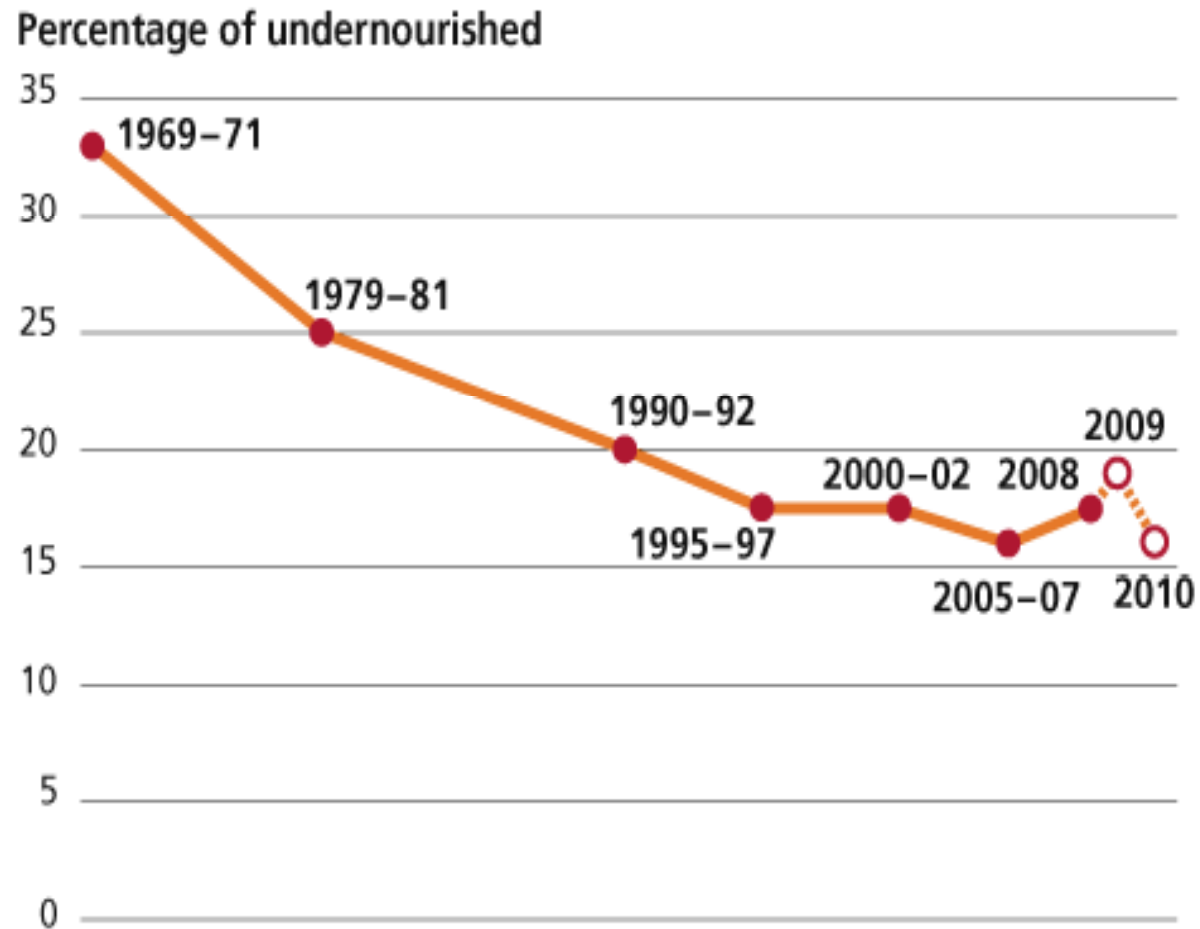


- 925 million chronically hungry people
- 2 billion people suffer from micronutrient deficiencies
- 25 million children and 250 million adults are obese

# Trends in world hunger



# Proportion of undernourished in developing countries





## Breaking down the hunger problem

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- **small-scale farmers**
- **rural landless people**
- **urban poor**
- **pastoralists, fishing, forestry, indigenous**
- **natural disasters and conflicts**
- **women and children**
- **elderly**
- **HIV/AIDS affected**



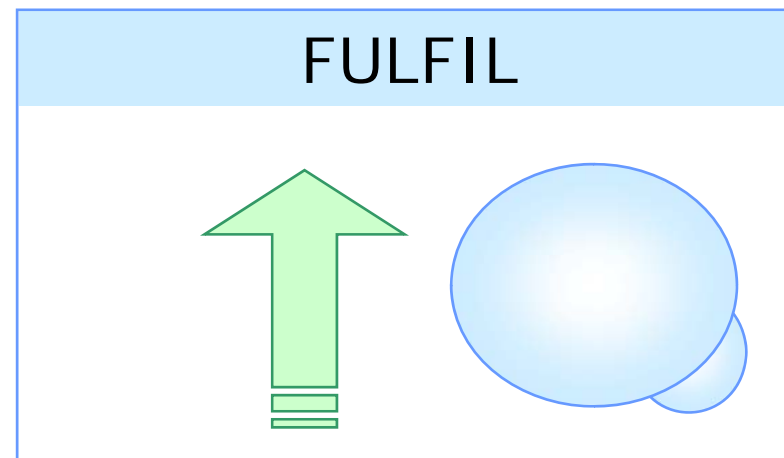
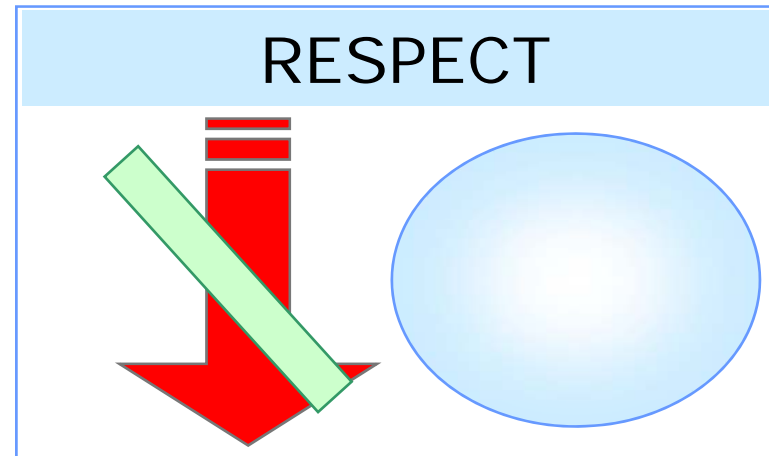
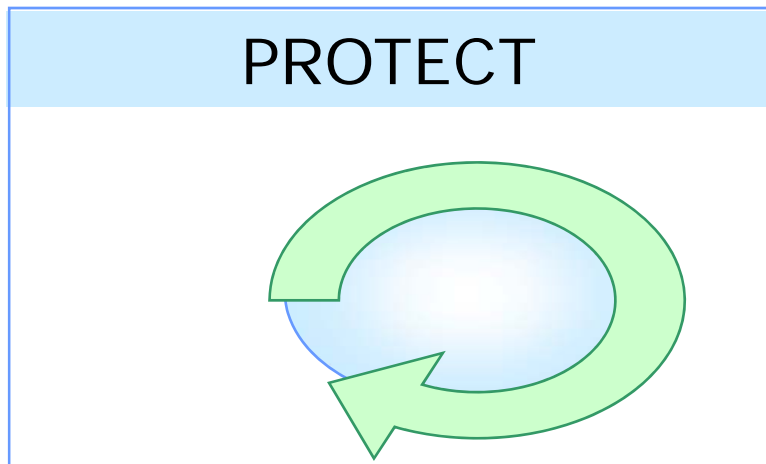
## Why the right to food? ... because it is a legal obligation

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- The right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, including **adequate food**
- The fundamental right of everyone to be **free from hunger**

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 160 State Parties

# Three levels of obligations





... because it is a political commitment

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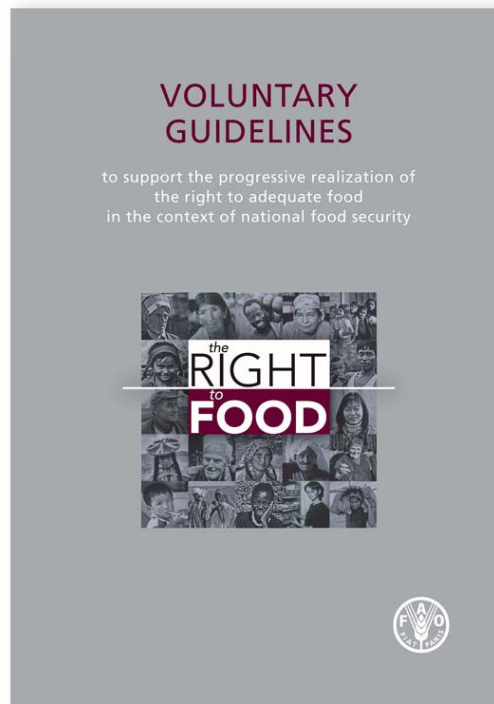
**FAO Constitution** since 1965  
“...and thus ensuring humanity’s  
freedom from hunger”

**World Food Summits 1996, 2002,  
2009**

**Millennium Declaration 2000,  
Outcome MDG Review 2010**

**FAO Strategic Framework:  
Organizational Result**

... because we have a practical tool



## Right to Food Guidelines

- Adopted by the FAO Council in November 2004
- Practical tool to implement right to food obligations
- Tackling the root causes of hunger (enabling environment)

## Why are they useful?

- Cover all necessary elements of a sound food security strategy and process
- Framework for cross-sectoral coordination
- Translate human rights principles into concrete recommendations for action
- Provide a basis for advocating for more equitable policies and programs





... because it adds value to sectoral efforts: food security & right to food

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**Common Elements:**

- Every human being
- Everywhere
- Can produce or procure
- Safe, sufficient, nutritious food
- Culturally acceptable
- For active and healthy life



## Right to Food is more

**Every person** —————> Right  
**States** —————> Obligations  
**Everyone** —————> Responsibilities

**Human rights principles - Accountability**

# Human Rights Based Approach

**Participation**

**Accountability**

**Non Discrimination**

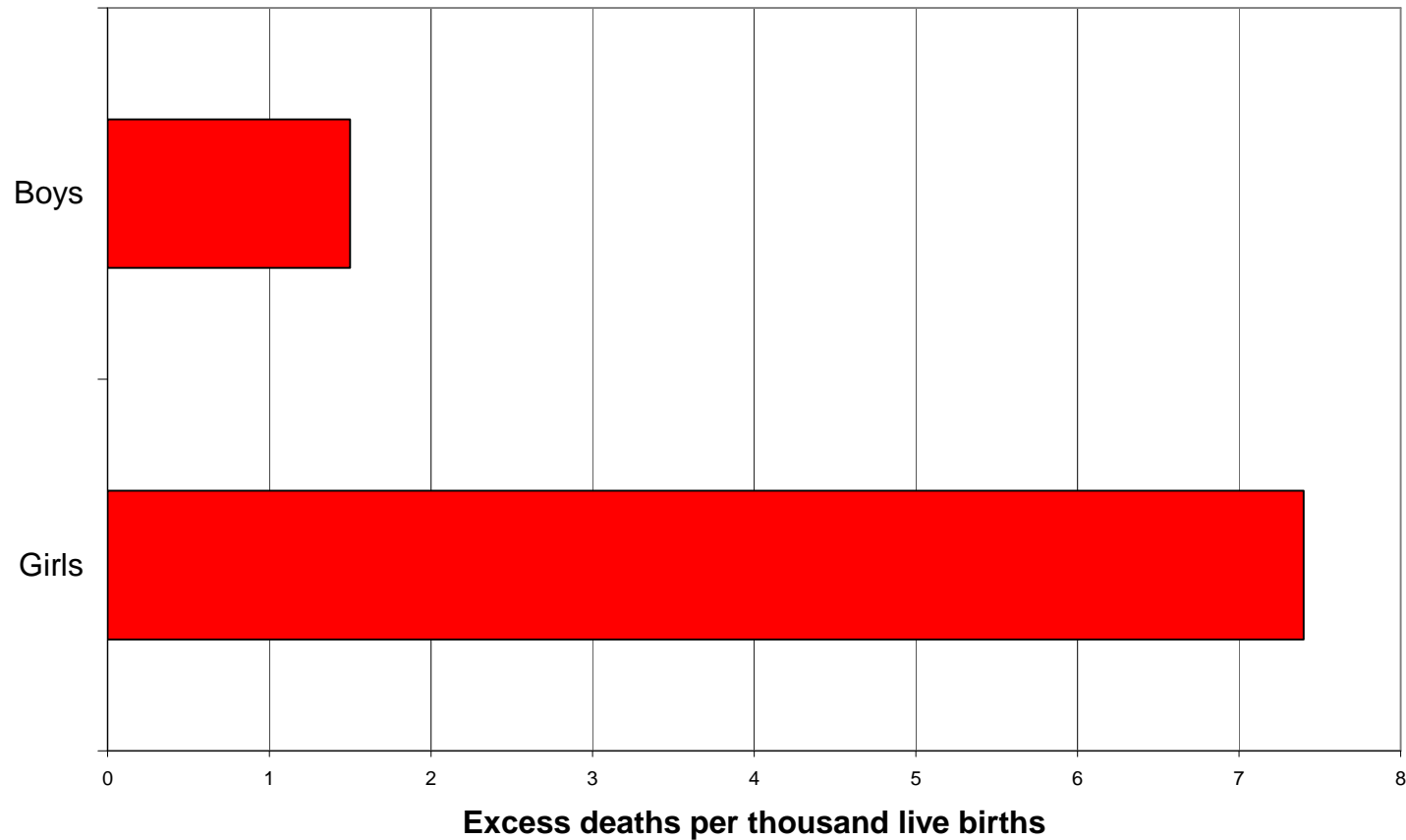
**Transparency**

**Human dignity**

**Empowerment**

**Rule of Law**

## Increase in infant mortality above the non-crisis baseline during large economic shocks.



Note: Data come from Baird *et al.* (2007) and are based on 122 cases of large declines in per capita GDP in developing countries. See SOFI 2009.



## ... A focus on women

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Hunger has a face: the face of a woman

- 70% of those who suffer from hunger and malnutrition
- 41% of total employment in agriculture
- in Sub-Saharan Africa: produce about 90% of food, provide 70% of all agricultural labor
- small-scale farmer
- inter-generational hunger
- solution through empowerment and agency





## ... A focus on small holders

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- 50% of the food insecure live in small-holder family households, 20% are landless agricultural laborers
- Small-holders need policies at local and global levels
- Needs to be a result of informed, empowered choices
- Solution: different models of agriculture (IAASTD), strengthen local institutions



## ... A focus on (small) farmers organisations

- ensure access to natural resources and sustainable use
- give voice, empower
- empowerment through information and knowledge
- ensure participation
- pool resources to obtain economies of scale
- obtain critical mass and bargaining power in the market place
- solidarity and mutual support schemes
- ensure coherence of delivery of public services



## ... A focus on land

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- Natural resources: not (only) a commodity
- Access to land: social, economic, nutrition, environment
- Unprecedented competition: land for food, feed or fuel
- Trend of concentration of ownership
- Global developments:
  - Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land and Other Natural Resources
  - Principles on Responsible Agricultural Investment

Guiding questions:

- Land for what?
- Who are the winners? Who the losers? Who decides?
- Is the prescribed medicine adequate? Which diagnosis



## Focus on MDGs

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- **MDG are not the same as human rights**
- **Millennium Declaration**
- **Focus on human rights in reaching MDGs**
- **Obligations of states go beyond MDGs**
- **Inclusiveness, focus on the poorest**
- **Goals versus processes**
- **MDG intermediate goal, need to think beyond 2015**



## Conclusion

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- ❖ **Hunger: a structural crisis with a human rights dimension**
- ❖ **Root/structural causes of hunger (discrimination)**
- ❖ **Focus on access to food and sustainability (economic, social, environmental)**
- ❖ **Emphasis on accountability, transparency**
- ❖ **MDG's can be achieved**
- ❖ **Policy choices: change is possible**



# Thank you!



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