

Review of Opportunities for Economic Growth and Job Creation in relation to Food Security and Nutrition

L20 Submission

The right to food is a human right recognised under international law which protects the right of all human beings to feed themselves in dignity, either by producing their food or by purchasing it.

To produce his or her own food, a person needs land, seeds, water and other resources, and to buy it, one needs money and access to the market. To purchase food, a person needs adequate incomes: the right to food consequently requires wage policies and social safety nets which enable citizens to realise their right to adequate food.

The right to food is inseparable from rights to food producers.

Agricultural workers represent over 40% of people engaged in agriculture, and many of these workers due to insufficient earnings suffer from hunger and malnutrition, while often delivering food to the supply chain of major transnational food companies.

The L20 is committed to a dignified life for all those involved in the planting, harvesting, preparation and serving of food that will all depend on for life. Further, the L20 believes that workers' rights are inescapably linked to food safety, the environment, and food security.

Much work has been done in this area by the Committee for Food Security, the IUF and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, and the L20 supports many of the conclusions they have reached.

Workers rights are human rights. An approach that respects human rights can increase and sustain food production and drive growth and job creation.

A rights based approach can be a guiding principle for investment at all levels and improve the ability of small scale farmers and workers to progressively realise decent work and the right to safe, adequate and nutritious food.

The Harnessing of jobs and growth in connection with food security

Options for macro-economic and sectoral policy reform

- Incorporation of an integrated food rights approach into existing policy.
- Conduct food security due diligence of existing policy.

Investment

- Support of agricultural communities and their economies, by provision of funding into research and development.

Infrastructure

- Public spending on public (particularly rural) infrastructure such as roads, irrigation, health and education should be encouraged.
- Investment in other rural infrastructure such as storage, efficiency, and waste recycling which reduces high levels of post harvest waste and increases agricultural productivity.

Market access, trade and agricultural productivity

- A shift in farming from monoculture towards greater varieties of crops, reduced use of fertilizers and other inputs, greater support for small-scale farmers (including access to credit and other services), and the fostering of more locally focused production and consumption of food.
- Promotion of tenure rights and land security.
- The L20 remains concerned at arrangements where large commercial interests are supported at the expense of small scale farmers. This risks undermining food security by reducing government policy space and sovereignty and adversely effecting small producers involved in farming important but less commercially attractive products.

Employment and social protection measures

- Food insecurity is largely linked with poverty, and the most effective remedy to this is decent employment.
- Consistent with this, and the fundamental right to be free from hunger, the L20 advocates collective bargaining and freedom of association as these offer the best way for people to escape poverty through decent jobs.
- Other important measures which would encourage decent jobs in the industry include:
 - ⇒ The promotion and enforcement of healthy and safe working environments.
 - ⇒ Ensuring that workers in agriculture have living wages.
 - ⇒ Ensuring women are free from discrimination and violence and the extension of social protection measures and training, health and other services.
- As large number of rural workers are not covered by social protection schemes, governments should establish and maintain social protection floors which would guarantee to all a national minimum level of income security in such a way that it allows everybody to buy all necessary goods and services, including food.