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## Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food

9 May 2019

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I hope this newsletter finds you well. I am pleased to share with you highlights from the start of 2019 and to preview some exciting events coming up in the next few months.

For those who have newly subscribed to the mailing list,<sup>i</sup> these newsletters are part of a greater initiative to improve the visibility of the work carried out under the right to food mandate and to ensure that it is inclusive and accessible to all partners. Mailing list members will also receive occasional email-blasts recapping my missions or participation in noteworthy events. I welcome any feedback, suggestions for relevant reports, or op-eds, etc., via email at [srfood@ohchr.org](mailto:srfood@ohchr.org) and invite you to follow me on Twitter [@HilalElver](https://twitter.com/HilalElver). I also encourage you to explore my blog, <https://hilalelver.org>, which not only serves as an information hub on the right to food, but is also regularly updated to feature breaking news and activities relevant to the mandate.

Here are some of the latest activities of the right to food mandate:

**2<sup>nd</sup> Global Conference of the Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) Programme.** From 5-7 February, I participated in the One Planet Network's second conference of its SFS programme, hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica in San José. The conference was intended to further strengthen multi-stakeholder action and to trigger increased political commitment for the creation of policy environments that will support the transition to sustainable food systems. I presented a keynote address emphasizing the importance of adopting a human rights-based approach when building food systems that are not only sustainable, but which also enable the progressive realization of the right to food. You can access the full-text of my speech and the conference outcome document through the new "[Archived Events](#)" page of my blog. (Check out this page for additional speeches and recordings from select past events!)

**Human Rights Council Session 40 in Geneva.** On 28 February, I presented my most recent thematic [report on fishery workers](#) and the right to food (A/HRC/40/56), and [country reports](#) following my visits to Viet Nam (2017), Indonesia (2018), and Argentina (2018) during a clustered interactive dialogue with the Human Rights Council (HRC). Full-text versions of these reports are available in all official languages on the OHCHR [website](#). Newsletter subscribers should have received an [email-blast](#) from the mandate team, recounting key moments from the interactive dialogue. For those who are interested in learning more about my statement and responses to stakeholder questions, you can watch complete video coverage from Geneva [here](#).



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Earlier that week, on 25 February, I held an expert consultation on my upcoming thematic report on Sustainable Development Goal 2 and the right to food (see the call for inputs below). On 1 March, I hosted a meeting with States and Geneva-based UN agencies, featuring Mario Arvelo, Chair of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), to discuss the mandate's ongoing Rome-based activities (as discussed below).

**Visit to Rome.** Following my presentation to the HRC, I visited Rome where I contributed to the CFS Bureau and Advisory Group Meeting and the OEWG on Food Systems and Nutrition. I also enjoyed productive meetings with the CFS Civil Society Mechanism, the Friends of the Right to Food Group, and representatives from the three Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs): the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Not only did this mission allow for me to meet with executive leadership from IFAD and WFP for the first time, but the visit coincided with the RBAs' celebration of International Women's Day, in which I was pleased to participate. You can read my full remarks discussing the important role that women play in realizing human rights for all and the continued fight for gender equality [here](#). You can also [review](#) the mandate team's email-blast recapping my activities in Rome.

**Continued Collaboration with CFS.** An inclusive consultative process to develop a Zero Draft of Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition is currently underway in CFS. Soon, regional consultations will start to further discuss the draft Guidelines. I was pleased for the opportunity to provide concrete feedback on the Preliminary version of the Zero Draft, and in particular, to recommend the clear inclusion of a human rights-based approach to operationalize the Voluntary Guidelines at the national level. You can read my feedback and that of other members [here](#). (To learn more CFS' ongoing activities, generally, check out the CFS [Working Space](#).) I have also been actively contributing to discussions at CFS pertaining to the preparation of the [Multi-Year Programme of Work](#) (MYPoW) 2020-2023. The first draft of the MYPoW is still in the process of elaboration; once finalized, it will be submitted to the CFS Bureau for approval and CFS46 plenary for adoption. The CFS Bureau has confirmed that I will keep my seat in the CFS Advisory Group, and has dedicated time for me to address the plenary on the first day of CFS46 this fall.

I have also prepared a summary of the *Global Thematic Event (GTE) on monitoring the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food* that took place during CFS45 on 18 October 2018 (Day 3, morning session). After my keynote remarks at the GTE, panelists discussed country-specific experiences about the implementation of the guidelines, focusing on challenges and opportunities. The discussion was further enriched by interventions of member States from the floor. You can read and download the full summary of the GTE [here](#).



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**Other Events, Publications.** In early February, I provided remarks at an event hosted by the UCLA School of Law’s Resnick Center for Food Law and Policy and the Promise Institute for Human Rights, featuring José Graziano da Silva, Director General of the FAO. I emphasized the historic role that the Director General played in bringing the concept of “zero hunger” to the international level based on his unique experience in Brazil. Video from the event is available on the “[Archived Events](#)” page of my blog. I also gave a lecture on *Food and Art* at the Inauguration of the Academic Year at the [Accademia di Brera, Milan](#), where I was honored to receive the title of Doctor Honoris Diploma.

On 2-3 April, I participated in a [high-level event](#) of the *Global Network Against Food Crises* on food and agriculture in times of crises in Brussels. The event was instrumental in bringing global attention to food crises in conflict and emergency situations, and the need for coordinated and joint actions to tackle root causes. In addition to being part of the closing panel of the event, I participated in another panel discussion that examined the challenges and potential of operationalizing the new UN Security Council Resolution 2417 on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, specifically focusing on conflict induced food insecurity, including famine, and “*underlining that using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare may constitute a war crime.*” I discussed issues of famine, conflict, and the crime of starvation further in an a “Story in focus” [interview](#) with the Starvation Accountability Project featured on the Global Rights Compliance website.

With respect to academic publications, you can read my chapter on taking a “Human Rights Based Approach to Sustainable Agricultural Policies and Food Security” in the [International Yearbook of Soil Law and Policy 2018](#) and my recent [op-ed](#) on scientific integrity and human rights published in The Hill. I am also pleased to introduce a new [commentary series](#) on my blog, featuring less formal pieces from the SR Food team on select issues.

**Upcoming Country Mission:** From 15 to 22 May 2019, I will be conducting an official mission to the Dominican Republic upon the invitation of the Government, in order to collect information and examine issues relevant to the right to food mandate and to engage in dialogue with the Government, civil society and academia on efforts to ensure the enjoyment of the right to food and new developments to implement Sustainable Development Goals in Dominican Republic. I will share my findings on best practices and my recommendations for practical solutions at the conclusion of my visit and in a full-report to the Human Rights Council in March 2020.

**Call for Input: Realizing the Right to Food in the time of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).** I am currently working on my next thematic report on the right to food and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be presented to the UN General Assembly in October 2019. I have already received crucial input on SDG 2 and the right to food from experts in Geneva and FAO specialists in Rome during informal consultations. I would like



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to extend an [invitation to all stakeholders](#) to share insight on opportunities and good practices – particularly practices based on a human rights approach - of States and other stakeholders, including private companies, to address inequality that hinders to eliminate hunger and malnutrition , as well as to monitor, support and implement progress under the relevant SDGs. Please send your responses by 20 May 2019 in Word format **via email** to [srfood@ohchr.org](mailto:srfood@ohchr.org) using the subject line "Submission to report on SDGs." Read the full “[call for submissions](#)” on the OHCHR website for more specific instructions and additional background information.

As always, thank you for your work in promoting the universal right to food and for defending those for whom it is not yet fully realized.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hilal Elver".

Hilal Elver  
Special Rapporteur on the right to food

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<sup>i</sup> If you have received this newsletter by mistake and would like to unsubscribe, please email [srfood@ohchr.org](mailto:srfood@ohchr.org) with the subject “Unsubscribe.”