CHAPTER 10

Food Security within the Framework of International Assistance for Development

Working towards Rural Sustainability for the Realization of the Right to Food

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Abstract

Different reasons have brought about a loss of food security and a need to recover that security. This need tends to be perceived as a priority within the framework of international assistance for development. International law has searched appropriate answers to food security problems in developing countries. This search has been based on aid and the inclusion of special treatment standards for developing countries in international agreements and instruments on agriculture, technical assistance and trade. In the last decade, the international assistance for development has become a complex task and the relation among agriculture, food security and the realization of the right to food has become evident even in international investment law, on account of the issue of land ownership. The relevance of the human rights dimension of food security has turned out to be strictly connected to that of the rural development’s sustainability. The purpose of this article is to draw a picture of the international legal framework for food security and development, in order to understand the position of States, international organizations and other actors and the relevance of the principles related to sustainable development in this connection.

Résumé

Différentes raisons ont conduit à une perte de la sécurité alimentaire et à la nécessité de récupérer cette sécurité. Ce besoin tend à être perçu comme une priorité dans le cadre de l'aide internationale pour le développement. Le droit international a fondé la recherche de réponses appropriées aux problèmes de sécurité alimentaire dans les pays en développement sur l'aide et l'inclusion de

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normes de traitement spécial pour ces pays dans les accords et instruments internationaux sur l’agriculture, l’assistance technique et le commerce. Dans la dernière décennie, l’assistance internationale pour le développement est devenue une tâche complexe et la relation entre l’agriculture, la sécurité alimentaire et la réalisation du droit à l’alimentation est devenue évidente, même en droit international des investissements, en raison de la question de la propriété terrienne. La pertinence de la dimension des droits de l’homme de la sécurité alimentaire est étroitement liée à celle de la durabilité du développement rural. Le but de cet article est de dresser un tableau du cadre juridique international pour la sécurité alimentaire et le développement, en vue de comprendre la position des États, des organisations internationales et des autres acteurs et la pertinence, à cet égard, des principes du développement durable.

I Introduction

The industrialization and delocalization of food production and the intensification of international trade of food products have contributed to the loss of food security at the international level and brought about a need to recover that security. This need tends to be perceived as a priority within the framework of international assistance for development. The internationally recognized organizations and agencies for this sector belong to the United Nations (UN) system. These are the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), the World Food Program (WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

The food security issue is composed of two parts: the food supply security and food safety. The first part is related to the access to nutritious, sufficient and human dignity-friendly food products in order to enjoy an active and healthy life, the employment of sustainable and ethical consumption, productive and distributive processes, as well as the assistance from international organizations to States. The second part concerns the quality of food products.

As a whole, “food security” – food supply security together with food safety – has a human rights dimension since the risks deriving from the lack of adequate quantities of food and/or from the consumption of unhealthy food products are risks for human health and in the end for human life. Such risks may be due to poor hygiene standards, environmental pollution, health issues, such as outbreaks of a communicable disease, the employment of chemical and/or biotechnological substances in food industrial processes. A few of these risks are considered “global” because they may occur in whatever State,