

UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHT TO FOOD
MISSION TO CANADA:
JOINT CIVIL SOCIETY SUBMISSION

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Introduction

In May 2012, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier De Schutter, will be undertaking a formal country mission to Canada. In order to prepare for this mission, Rapporteur staff contacted people across Canada to solicit feedback on what priority issues the Rapporteur might consider for investigation. After discussion with Rapporteur staff, it was made clear that a collective internal process within civil society to commonly establish priorities would be appreciated by the Rapporteur, and would have greater impact on his selection of issues than individual responses. As such, a cross-section of civil society from across the country came together and agreed to undertake a collective process.

A Coordinating Committee was formed, composed of Anna Paskal, Sophia Murphy, Annette Desmarais, Rebecca Schiff and Bruce Porter. The Coordinating Committee together with people from across the country established a submission format to collect input on priority issues, and put out a widespread call for submissions. As a result, over forty submissions were received from coast to coast to coast. This document is an attempt to compile and prioritize the submissions received. As such, it is important to note that all material is based on the submissions received alone. Though a cross-Canada discussion to address gaps was undertaken, gaps of all kinds undoubtedly remain.

It is also important to note that in some issue areas, there are significant differences of opinion. This document is not a consensus document, and as such the document as a whole does not represent the viewpoint of all of the people and organizations that participated in the submission process. Annex 1 at the end of the document briefly summarizes some of the diverging perspectives.

Special Rapporteur's definition of the right to food

(From <http://www.srfood.org/index.php/en/right-to-food>)

The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement. The right to adequate food shall therefore not be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense that equates it with a minimum package of calories, proteins and other specific nutrients. The right to adequate food will have to be realized progressively. However, states have a core obligation to take the necessary action to mitigate or alleviate hunger even in times of natural and other disasters (General Comment No. 12, at para. 6). For the Special Rapporteur, the right to food is the right to have regular, permanent and unrestricted access, either directly or by means of financial purchase, to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food corresponding to the cultural traditions of the people to which the consumer belongs, and which ensure a physical and mental, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified life free of fear.

In certain circumstances, States are under an obligation to provide food to those in need. But the right to food is not primarily about being fed. It is about being guaranteed the right to feed oneself, which requires not only that food is available (that the ratio of production to the population is sufficient), but also that it is accessible – i.e., that each household either has the means to produce its own food, or has sufficient purchasing power to buy the food it needs. As recognized both under these provisions and in customary international law, the right to food imposes on all States obligations not only towards the persons living on their national territory, but also towards the populations of other States. These two sets of obligations complement one another. The right to food can only be fully realized where both ‘national’ and ‘international’ obligations are complied with: national efforts will often remain of limited impact in combating malnutrition and food insecurity unless the international environment (including not only development assistance and cooperation but also trade and investment regimes or efforts to address climate change at a global level) facilitates and rewards these national efforts; conversely, any efforts by the international community to contribute to these objectives will depend, for their effectiveness, on the establishment of institutional and legal frameworks at the national level, and on policies which are effectively geared towards the realization of the right to food in the country concerned.

Priority issues emerging from submission process

The Coordinating Committee received more than 40 submissions for the Special Rapporteur's mission to Canada. All of the submissions will be forwarded to the Special Rapporteur as background documentation, in a separate mailing. This compiled proposal is drawn from submissions received; it does not attempt to be full and comprehensive in its treatment of the right to food in Canada. It is also not a consensus document in terms of the analysis advanced. Instead, it presents a cross section of the country's civil society assessment of the key priority issues for investigation, as well as a snapshot of some civil society-led initiatives that respond to the Canadian government's failure to realize the universal human right to food.

The proposals have been categorized into five priority areas. These areas are inter-related and overlap, but nonetheless can usefully be considered as distinct. The areas are intended to facilitate the Special Rapporteur team's work, not to create an exhaustive model of Canada's complex food systems.

The five priority issue areas are:

1. Hunger, poverty and the right to food
2. Indigenous Peoples and the right to food
3. The industrial food model and the right to food
4. Governance and the right to food
5. Canada and the right to food internationally (extra-territorial obligations)

1. Hunger, poverty and the right to food

Hunger, poverty and the right to food clearly emerged as the overall top priority from amongst the over forty submissions received from across Canada. Respondents unanimously agreed that Canada has failed to respect, protect and fulfill the right to food by not ensuring that all Canadians have an adequate income with which to feed themselves and their families.

Canada is a rich country. Canada is often rated as one of the most desirable countries worldwide in which to live. It is clear Canada has the means to fulfill the human right to food. For more than 30 years, however, Canada's governments have increasingly relied upon private charity to make up for significant shortfalls in the public welfare system. Millions of Canadians rely on private charity for shelter, food and other essential needs. What was intended to provide short-term and limited help has become long-term and systemic, as government programs to help people out of poverty fall desperately short of what is needed.

Before the financial meltdown of 2008, 3.5 million Canadians lived in poverty. This figure is expected to climb to 5.3 million by the end of 2011. A direct consequence of rising inequality is increasing hunger in Canada. It is unacceptable, in a country as prosperous as Canada, that an estimated two and a half million people are food insecure. Furthermore, this number is likely an underestimate due to the limitations of current data collection instruments.

Millions of poor and marginalized people in Canada regularly don't have enough money to buy food for themselves and their families. Fixed income rates, such as those provided by Social Assistance and Disability Support Programs, are too low to allow recipients to procure food and cover other basic needs. One example among many: a single person on social assistance in Toronto receives \$599 a month for shelter and basic needs, yet the average market rent for a bachelor apartment alone is \$778. Low-income people across the country regularly have to choose between paying their rent and buying food. As such, a flagrant abuse of the right to food – legislated poverty – occurs daily in Canada.

Among the millions of food insecure in Canada are thousands of people with jobs, particularly those who work for minimum wage. In Ontario, for instance, an hourly minimum wage rate of \$10.25 means full time work yields an income that falls below the low income cut off (LICO) poverty line. It is not possible to eat a healthy diet while earning minimum wage.

Poverty and hunger are symptoms of growing social and economic inequality in Canada. A recent OECD study found that income inequality has been increasing in Canada more than in other OECD countries: The study found that in Canada " [t]he rise in inequality was largely due to widening disparities in labour earnings between high and low-paid workers, but also to less redistribution."

The Conference Board of Canada recently found that Canada ranks 15th out of 17 countries in terms of poverty among working-age people and gave Canada a 'D' rating on that basis. Income inequality in Canada has increased over the past 20 years while it has decreased in other countries.

Another worrisome trend is the rise in elderly poverty since the mid-1990s, following 20 years of dramatic reductions. Between 2006 and 2009, nearly 128,000 more seniors were living in low income. Of that amount, 70 per cent were women.

Single mothers continue to experience poverty and hunger disproportionately. About 21.5 per cent of single mothers were living below the low-income cutoff in 2009, according to Statistics Canada. While this is a significant improvement from the mid-1990s, when half of single mothers were considered to be living in poverty, this is largely a result of a lower unemployment rate, allowing single mothers to become more active in the workforce. Single mothers who rely on social assistance are still forced to live far below the poverty line.

Women are disproportionately among the poor in other sectors of the population, as well. According to a 2009 study by Monica Townson entitled *Women's Poverty in the Recession*, approximately 40% of employed women worked in precarious jobs (low remuneration, little or no job security, and no benefits); only 39% of unemployed women received Employment Insurance benefits; women account for 60% of minimum wage workers; and “the incidence of low incomes for female lone-parent families was almost 5 times as high as that of two-parent families.” (Another useful reference on women and poverty in Canada can be found at <http://criaw-icref.ca/WomenAndPoverty>).

Poverty is most widespread and severe among racialized¹ and immigrant groups facing systemic discrimination and exclusion. In Ontario, census data from 2005, prior to the recession, showed that racialized families were three times more likely to live in poverty than non-racialized families. Racialized women are particularly likely to experience poverty and hunger. In 2006 racialized women earned 53.4 cents for every dollar non-racialized men earned and 83.7 cents for every dollar non-racialized women earned. 26% of the population of Ontario is racialized but 41% of those living in poverty are racialized.

Immigration status is also strongly linked to risk of poverty and hunger. In Ontario, where recent immigrants make up 5% of the population, they make up 13% of households living in poverty.

People with disabilities are also far more likely to live with poverty and hunger. In 2005 almost half a million (20.5%) working-age adults 15 to 64 years with disabilities lived in

¹ “Racialized” is used here in preference to Statistics Canada's term “visible minority”. It refers (in line with the Employment Equity Act) to, “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour”. The visible minority population in Canada consists mainly of people of Chinese, South Asian, Black, Arab, West Asian, Filipino, Southeast Asian, Latin American, Japanese and Korean descent.

poverty. Canadians with disabilities are twice as likely to be living in poverty as people who do not have disabilities. The employment rate among people with serious disabilities is only 36.7%. Because many people with disabilities have incomes that fall below the taxpaying threshold they derive no benefit from the Disability Tax Credit and other disability tax measures.

Migrant workers are also extremely vulnerable to poverty and hunger. In 2011, more than 250,000 migrant workers entered Canada under a variety of federal Temporary Foreign Worker programs that typically leave migrant and temporary workers at the mercy of their employers. There are also an estimated half a million undocumented migrants in Canada, surviving on extremely low wages and usually with no access to social services.

Without income security, individuals, families and communities cannot satisfy their most basic food needs, much less move beyond simply affording food to having control over their own food systems. The connection between income insecurity and food insecurity can be seen throughout Canada, from urban to rural to remote settings.

People in cities mainly obtain their food by purchasing it, but one in ten urban residents experience limited or inadequate food access due to financial constraints. Many low-income urban residents rely on Canada's 900 food banks and other charitable agencies. 2011 saw extremely high rates of food bank use, with nearly 900,000 people depending on them in one month alone. Food bank use is rising at an alarming rate, with a 26% increase over the course of the recent recession. The act of asking for charity to fulfill food needs is by its very nature a humiliating experience. Studies show that only between one-fifth and one-third of people who are food insecure make use of food banks, so food insecurity is likely far more widespread than even these numbers suggest.

Most food banks in Canada do not receive government funding. They rely on donations of money, food and time from the community. Due to high demand and limited supply, food banks are only able to offer 1 or 2 hampers per month per individual. Each hamper contains enough food on average for three to five days. Since the onset of the recession, a third of food banks report regularly running out of food. They cannot possibly meet the full food-related health and cultural requirements and preferences of those they assist. Food banks are not an appropriate long-term response to household food insecurity. The ongoing systemic dependence on institutions that were meant as emergency stop-gap measures based on surplus and donated food is neither equal to nor appropriate to the scope and scale of the problem.

Food banks are symptomatic of Canada's broken social safety net. The government is relying on the charitable sector while leaving the structural foundations of poverty and hunger unaddressed.

Low-income communities often face what have been termed "food deserts". Food deserts are areas that combine high poverty rates with limited or no access to healthy food. They occur in both urban and rural settings. Access may be limited due to the lack of available

transportation to larger stores or fresh markets. Where fresh fruits and vegetables are available within the “desert”, they are typically much more expensive than the prices on comparable foods sold at the larger chain grocery stores or at farmers markets. In one study undertaken in Winnipeg, the prices of basic food items, such as meat, eggs, vegetables, fruits, and milk at a local store in a low-income neighbourhood were compared to prices at a superstore located in a more prosperous neighbourhood. Overall, basic items at the local store in the poorer neighbourhood cost 49% more than the fuller-service grocery store. Communities are not designed or planned to encourage healthy and affordable food choices and as a result, unhealthy foods are more convenient and cost less than good food.

Although rural and remote communities are primary areas for food production, hunting, gathering and fishing, food insecurity is a daily reality for many rural Canadians. In the Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the northern parts of the provinces food insecurity affects between 11% and 32% of the population. Poverty is more widespread in rural and remote communities than in urban areas, and is compounded by the lower availability of fresh produce and other nutritious foods as well as long distances to reach high-priced grocery stores. At the same time, agricultural land in the North (where it exists) is being lost to recreational use, resource extraction, and industrial activities. These activities also negatively impact surrounding food producing lands and waterways as well as local wild food supplies.

Food insecurity has extensive negative personal, household, community and societal implications. Food insecurity in Canada is associated with chronic diseases including type II diabetes and high blood pressure, as well as higher levels of depression, stress, anxiety, social isolation, eating disorders, impaired cognitive abilities, and increased use of clinical services. Food insecurity also affects families. It is linked to lower levels of positive parent-child interactions, poorer infant feeding practices, poorer psychological health among children, and depression and suicidal tendencies in adolescents.

Childhood hunger is a serious problem in Canada. Despite Canada having ratified the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child, which explicitly includes the right to food, Canada is the only G8 country with no federally-funded school meal program. With widespread urban and rural poverty, many children go to school hungry. Students with decreased overall diet quality are more likely to perform poorly in school, and have more behavioural and emotional problems. As well, many children grow up without learning how to access and prepare healthy food, undermining the ability of future generations to nourish healthy bodies, families and societies.

Food insecurity across Canada demonstrates a state failure – at the municipal, provincial and federal levels - to respect, protect, and fulfill the right to food. Canada does not even have mechanisms in place to measure national rates of food insecurity on an on-going basis. Government policies at all levels fail to adequately address the continued barriers to dignified economic and physical access to sufficient quantities of sustainable, healthy, and culturally acceptable food.

While the government is failing Canadians, individuals, communities and organizations across the country have come together to establish initiatives, programs and policies to create new realities for low-income and marginalized people (e.g. women, Indigenous People, lesbians, gays, bi-sexuals, transexuals, people with cognitive disabilities, physical disabilities, mental illness, recent immigrants to Canada, racialized communities). These civil society responses play an important role in not only combating hunger and inequality, but in bringing decision-making power back into the hands of low-income and marginalized people.

Many community-initiatives are detailed in the proposals annexed to this submission. They include:

- Student nutrition programs such as school meal and snack initiatives, gardening, cooking and food literacy projects in daycares and schools.
- Farm to Cafeteria programs that close the distance ‘between farm and fork’, bringing local, nutritious and sustainably produced foods into public agencies (such as universities, hospitals, schools, etc).
- Community Food Centers – using the entry point of an emergency food program, such as a food bank or meal program, to engage people in activities such as cooking, gardening and action on food and hunger issues, and as a base for alternative food distribution projects that promote healthy food access, skill-building, community participation and support of the local agricultural economy
- Non-Profit Food Hubs – facilitating the connection between local producers and urban/rural eaters, and thereby bringing healthy fresh food to local populations and institutions, while supporting sustainable livelihoods for food producers.
- Community kitchens, cooking skills collectives, collective purchasing groups, community-supported agriculture, community-supported fisheries, farmers markets in low-income areas, Good Food Boxes, Good Food Markets, and much more.

Civil society organizations are also advocating for a wide range of policy changes that would significantly reduce rates of poverty, inequality and food insecurity in Canada. These are listed at the end of the document.

Related submissions:

Ottawa Mission

Good Food Box Ottawa

Just Food Ottawa

Ottawa Poverty Reduction Network

FoodShare (Toronto)

The Stop (Toronto)
Equiterre (Montreal)
Food Secure Canada/People's Food Policy (National)
Health Providers Against Poverty (National)
Food Matters Manitoba / Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
North End Food Security Network (Winnipeg)
Farm to Cafeteria (National)
Foodbanks Canada (National)
Winnipeg Harvest (Manitoba)
Squamish foodies (British Columbia)
Dietitians of Canada (National)
Breakfast for Learning (National)
Toronto Food Policy Council (Ontario)
Participatory Action Research and Training Centre on Food Security (Nova Scotia)

Associated suggested site visits:

Ottawa, ON
Toronto, ON
Sandy Bay, SK
Squamish or Whistler, BC
Montreal, QC
Nova Scotia
Winnipeg, MB

2. Indigenous peoples and the right to food

Issues regarding the right to food and Indigenous Peoples in Canada relate not only to the government's failure to meet its duties and obligations under the ICESCR but also its failure to fulfill those duties and obligations under the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. For the purposes of this document, this issue area will include urban, on reserve, off reserve, remote and northern issues. However, it is important to underline that northern and remote issues do not only affect Indigenous communities, but all residents of northern and remote areas of Canada.

There are many challenges currently facing Indigenous peoples and the right to food. These date back to the first colonial settlements in North America. Successive governments have failed to uphold the treaties made at that time (first the British administration, and then, from 1867, the Canadian government). Industrial development, especially mining and forestry, as well as urban sprawl have taken and polluted land, water and air. Hunters, fishers and gatherers have been confined into smaller and smaller areas due to the creation of land reserves, national parks, private lands, over-fishing, etc. This affects not only the ability of Indigenous peoples to eat and use customary foods, but has undermined the very fabric of Indigenous communities and the foundations of traditional knowledge.

Indigenous communities now face widespread poverty, hunger, lack of affordable housing, eroded culture and language and other social difficulties, both on reserve and off. The ability to access traditional foods has been pushed aside by mainstream economic interests in many sectors, including: forest management planning; hydro development that impacts the health of fish and other species dependent on these ecosystems; mining activities, roads, industrial and housing.

Many northern communities are suffering a food crisis. High levels of food insecurity in the North are due to many factors including isolation (there are few roads, many are in poor condition, and some communities are completely cut off at certain times of year or have no road access at all), monopoly by Northern Stores, high poverty rates, the ongoing process of colonization which many northern communities acutely experience, and decline in country food consumption. For instance, food insecurity in northern Manitoba is more than 3 times the Canadian average. A recent survey found levels of 75% food insecurity in 14 northern Manitoba communities. In fly-in communities (where there is no road access) the rates were still higher, with more than half the houses surveyed experiencing severe food insecurity (79% of the population).

One northern community, Old Crow in the Yukon, demonstrates the extremely difficult situation that is experienced in many communities across the Arctic. The community is heavily dependent on a traditional subsistence diet based on the land and water that surrounds them. Traditional food species, including the Porcupine Caribou and Pacific salmon, are jeopardized by changing environmental conditions due to climate change. At the same time, the food for sale in stores is very expensive. A 2008 study showed that the Northern Food Basket (nutritious necessities) cost more than twice as much in Old Crow

as in Whitehorse, an already expensive town. There are also severely limited choices for fresh produce in Northern Stores, and the choices that are available are often rotten (e.g. one can purchase yoghurt or fruit and find it rotten the next day, or it is already rotten sitting on the shelves). Many of the Northern Stores have a policy of not putting food on the shelves until the previous lot is sold, meaning that blackened mouldy food sits on the shelves while fresh produce is held in the back of the store. This makes it very difficult, almost impossible in fact, for most residents to be able to afford or access healthy foods from local stores, while traditional foods are becoming less available due to unpredictable environmental conditions, high fuel costs and other threats to wildlife such as mining and gas exploration.

Mining and other industrial development are having extensive impacts on the right to food in Indigenous and other northern and remote communities. Mining and pulp mill related mercury pollution has had significant impacts on First Nations and Inuit communities in many areas, including in Pinchi Lake where it has affected the Tl'azt'en and Nak'azdli People's ability to fish (<http://www.nwttgroup.com/pinchi.html>). Contamination of water and fish from the tar sands is affecting Fort Chippeawa. In British Columbia there is concern over threats to salmon posed by an increase in mining activity. The proposed Prosperity Gold-Copper Mine in BC threatens an important Sockeye Salmon run and if constructed will eliminate a "back-up" fishery of rainbow trout that has been an important resource to the Tsilhqot'in people. These are but a few of many available examples (see www.miningwatch.ca).

The situation is also difficult for the increasing number of Indigenous People who live in urban settings. The majority of urban Indigenous People live below the Low-Income Cut-off Line (LICO) of \$20,000 a year. They experience the hardships described in the preceding "Hunger, poverty and the right to food" section, as well as discrimination based on race and ethnicity. One in three off-reserve indigenous households are food insecure, according to the most recent research. Indigenous peoples are consistently over-represented at food banks. For example, while Indigenous People comprise only 3.8% of Canada's population, 10% of people assisted by food banks self-identify as First Nations, Métis or Inuit, rising to 24% in the four provinces of western Canada.

Living in urban settings brings additional challenges to the realization of the right to food. Some city by-laws create barriers for Indigenous Peoples who wish to continue traditional ways of enjoying and preparing food, due to restrictions on processing meat and fish. Indigenous agencies that host feasts and other meals are unable to access many traditional foods without violating these by-laws. It is well documented that diabetes and obesity levels are high in Indigenous communities. The combination of lack of access to traditional foods and the prevalence of food deserts (described in section 1. above) impoverishes the physical, emotional, and cultural health of urban Indigenous communities.

It is essential to consider jurisdiction in relation to Indigenous peoples' right to food in Canada. Indigenous affairs are a constitutional responsibility of the federal government. Governments (including First Nations and Inuit governments) must therefore do more to

respect, protect and fulfill the right to food among First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations. There are several factors that distinguish Indigenous household food insecurity specifically:

- The excessive scale of the problem
- The severity and complexity of the barriers Indigenous populations face in achieving the right to food
- The historic role of governments and government-supported bodies in creating the current situation (colonization, the reserve system, residential schools, etc.)
- Ongoing under-investment in education, social services, and housing available to Indigenous populations
- An admission by governments that extraordinary measures are necessary to address Indigenous issues, both connected to and beyond the right to food

Only a collaborative engagement between various levels of government and Indigenous community leaders can develop a forward-looking resolution to the problem. Too often northern, First Nations, and Inuit communities fall between the cracks because of jurisdictional issues. Given Canada's democratic governance and its jurisdictional boundaries, only the federal government can promote and facilitate this type of collaboration at both the interdepartmental and intersectoral levels.

Ways forward must be based on mutual respect and understanding, and Indigenous Peoples must speak for themselves. The challenges include addressing the critical state of food, land and sovereignty on a larger scale. Indigenous food sovereignty will be realized when the conditions of unsustainable over-exploitation that are damaging Indigenous communities are recognized as human rights issues and dealt with accordingly. Canada did, after much delay, eventually endorse the "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples", but the country has failed to implement its obligations under this declaration.

Related submissions:

Aboriginal People's Congress (National)
Food Matters Manitoba / Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
Food Secure Canada/People's Food Policy (National)
North End Food Security Network (Winnipeg)
Arctic Institute of Community-Based Research (Yukon)
Squamish Foodies (BC)
Health Providers Against Poverty (National)
(plus separate submission from Assembly of First Nations)

Associated suggested site visits:

Nunavut (Iqaluit/Clyde River/Cape Dorset/Pangnirtung)
Turtle Lodge; Sagkeeng First Nation (Fort Alexander) – Manitoba
Northern Manitoba (Garden Hill First Nation)

Winnipeg, MB
Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation/ Old Crow, Yukon Territory
Squamish/Whistler BC
Attawapiskat First Nation, Ontario
Pikangikum First Nation, Ontario
Muskoday First Nation, Saskatchewan – Muskoday Organic Growers Cooperative
Matimekush-Lac John First Nation, Quebec
Northern Ontario – Sandy Lake First Nation or other reserve community
Winnipeg/Regina/Saskatoon
Northern British Columbia

3. The industrial food model and the right to food

Under this heading, the authors have included issues raised by submissions that touch on the right to food in relation to how Canada procures its food: namely, food production and processing systems (including agriculture and fisheries), trade policy, and related impacts on health and the environment.

Since World War II, Canada has undertaken one of the most intense and significant experiments in industrial agriculture anywhere in the world. Government policy encouraged a wholesale and deliberate shift to large scale, technologically and chemically intensive modes of production. Globally, instead of being treated as a human right, food has become a commodity for trade and speculation, and this is perfectly reflected in Canada, where we have a trade policy masquerading as an agricultural policy. This mass production, export-led approach has led to thousands and thousands of family farms going out of business, the destruction of rural communities and economies, the poisoning of our land and waters, the collapse of our fisheries, the concentration of land into fewer and fewer hands, the erosion of natural resources, the loss of genetic and biodiversity, as well as undermining cultures and ways of life. Industrial agriculture is also a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. The impacts of the industrial food model are felt across the entire food system, throughout Canada and abroad – undermining Canada’s ability to respect, protect and fulfill the right to food.

At the same time, the industrial food model has led to a crisis in health. Industry-led food production and distribution favours high calorie, low nutrient food (high in sodium, sugar, and fat content etc.). Concentration in food retail has displaced local businesses and created food deserts across the country, resulting in a growing number of Canadians who lack options to access healthy food – if indeed they are even able to afford it. This links to the unprecedented rates of heart disease, obesity and other diet-related illness that are prevalent in Canada. In addition to personal, household and community implications, there are also far-reaching societal implications. By 2020, it is estimated that diabetes will cost the Canadian healthcare system \$16.9 billion a year. Heart disease and stroke, which are linked to poor diets, already cost the Canadian economy more than \$20.9 billion every year. In a country that supports universal medical care, this is not only a medical emergency but a national emergency.

Food production: The Canadian government privileges large-scale agriculture through myriad policies, programs and legislation, including public investment in and commercial approval for the wide-spread use of genetically-modified organisms. This makes it much harder for small and medium “conventional” farmers, as well as all organic farmers, to survive. As a result, small, medium and organic farmers go out of business, and Canadians have less access to locally produced food, including organic food. This is particularly problematic as farmers the world over, including in Canada, are the foundation of parallel healthy and sustainable food systems (including the guardians and nurturers of critical genetic and seed diversity), and must be supported if we are to have

sustainable food systems into the future. Small-scale bio-diverse farmers not only replenish eco-systems but play essential roles in local economies, cultures and health.

Key challenges to the right to food in Canada linked to food production include:

- The rapid concentration of farmland ownership and tenure in Canada over the past five decades, reducing the number of family farms and concentrating ownership of food-producing land
- The rise of ‘large-scale land acquisitions and leases’ (“land grabbing”) in Canada, shifting control of our farms and food systems from farmers and citizens to foreign-controlled agribusiness corporations
- The increasing commercial pressures on farmland, in particular for urban development, and for the development of other resources (oil and gas, carbon credits, etc) over food production
- The rising cost of farmland in Canada, and the particular challenges this presents to smaller scale agricultural producers providing for local and domestic markets as well as for new farmers to go into production
- The specific challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples in accessing and utilizing farmland
- Making our food production system less sustainable over time —environmentally, economically, and biophysically

Meanwhile, Canada is facing a crisis of renewal in agriculture within the next 10 years. Farmers are getting older in Canada and few young people are entering farming. Just 2% of the Canadian population farms. With fewer than 30,000 young farmers in Canada today and the fastest pace of decline in our history, fewer and fewer farmers will be producing our food in the future. This loss of farmers has serious implications for Canada’s food security.

At the same time, Canadian agriculture is relying more and more on migrant farm workers. Brought in on temporary foreign worker visas, migrant farm labourers are in a precarious position. Any perceived breach of contract may lead to removal from Canada. Unlike other classes of temporary foreign workers, migrant farmworkers, who may have been working in Canada annually for years or even decades, are denied any kind of pathway to permanent residency or immigration. Services targeted towards other newcomers, such as new immigrants and refugees, are generally not available to migrant farm workers. Canada has not ratified the principal international agreements relating specifically to the protection of migrant workers.

There are also problems related directly to the scale of industrial food production, for instance regulations that effectively deny access to local meat processed in small-scale abattoirs, or to raw milk, due to health and safety regulations designed for larger producers. Large-scale production necessitates much stricter and more expensive control systems that create impossible hurdles for smaller producers. One regulatory act in British Columbia alone resulted in the loss of over 300 farm-based abattoirs. The loss of those abattoirs had a devastating domino effect across the livestock sector, the supply businesses for that sector (fencing, chick supply, etc.), food security in small

communities used to accessing meat from the “farm-gate”, and soil fertility (because the manure from these animals was providing important nutrients). The situation with access to raw milk underscores the lack of scale-appropriate provisions in our health and safety regulations. In Canada, the right to consume raw milk (unpasteurized, fresh milk raised on sustainable, small-scale dairies) is limited to a single owner of a dairy animal and his or her immediate family. Canada is the only G8 country that prohibits all sales and distribution of unpasteurized milk. Those who self-organize to access this food locally are liable to prosecution, demonstrating that legal and regulatory structures are not designed to support local small-scale food economies.

The right to food in relation to fisheries merits serious attention in Canada. Canadian fishing practices have devastated fish stocks and the coastal communities that depended on them. A key premise to industrial food production is that food gets cheaper as production increases and that it takes fewer people to participate in this production. The primary way to do this is through mechanization. In the fisheries, this has meant large ocean-going factory trawlers dragging nets along the ocean floor, using sonar and radar to find the fish. Implicit in that vision is that corporate profits are the measure of success, not whether or not the men and women working on the ships and in the fish plants can earn a reasonable livelihood. This vision of prosperity ignored the need for sustainable fisheries. While there was some overfishing as early as the 1950s, when big trawlers were first introduced, it only took 15 short years (once the Canadian government was able to supervise the cod fishery out to the 200-mile limit) to fish out the Northern Cod, a fish stock of mythical proportions. Atlantic Canada is still dealing with the social, cultural and economic implications of the collapse of this sector. The companies involved have moved abroad to find fish elsewhere.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans acts as though its clients are the large fishing industry and ignores all other stakeholders. They overlook the small-scale fisheries’ role in supplying Canada with seafood and ignore its centrality to the culture and economies of coastal communities. Fishing could provide more self-sufficiency and local food, as well as a viable income, if local capacities were built and changes to policy were put in place.

Across the country, communities have come together to build a parallel healthy, ecological and fair food system for Canada. The initiatives listed above in the “Hunger, poverty and right to food section” are again relevant here, as well as:

- Incubator farms and other forms of support for new and immigrant farmers
- Non-profit certification agencies that directly connect buyers (including institutions) and environmentally and socially sustainable producers
- Community seed exchanges, seed banks, seed diversity and heritage seed conservation and propagation programs
- Projects to reintroduce indigenous food plants
- Farm projects that adapt existing urban farm models to the particularities of smaller towns
- Community bartering initiatives or food exchanges

- Common ownership of productive resources (food coops; etc)
- Local and municipal food governance models such as Food Policy Councils; food charters; Indigenous councils to manage food and ecological resources.
- Community-action research projects to 1) improve food at schools; 2) reduce schools' negative impact on the environment and on the health of school communities; 3) transform curriculum content and ways of learning; 4) attain an understanding of food as a grand connector between humans and nature and a contributor to negative environmental impacts influencing climate change.

Health: Due to their inability to purchase high quality nutritious food, Canadians living in poverty are the most vulnerable to chronic physical and mental health problems. In 2007-2008, close to two and a half million Canadians were food insecure. However there is growing and compelling evidence that Canadians of all incomes experience chronic health problems and sometimes premature death due to poor quality diet, less than optimal nutrition, and occasional exposure to unsafe food. This starts with inadequate peri-natal nutrition and breastfeeding, premature weaning, and reliance on processed commercial infant and baby foods. About 70% of Canadian children and adults do not eat the recommended amount of vegetables and fruit, milk and milk alternatives or whole grain products. In addition, there are disturbing trends in the prevalence of overweight and obese adults, adolescents and children. In the latest figures from 2009, nearly one quarter of adults were obese.

A coherent response will require a whole-of-government commitment to policies and programs that guarantee universal access to healthy and safe food. This recognizes that Canadians' food choices are mediated by their surroundings, opportunities and conditions of life. These policies and programs should include the design and implementation of a federal poverty prevention and elimination strategy, and a host of supportive measures to ensure access to healthy food in workplaces, schools, municipalities and low income neighbourhoods. It will also be necessary to shift Canadian agriculture to support domestic production and consumption of healthy food, and to rethink the food safety regulatory agenda to ensure appropriate protection from food borne illness, exposure to environmental contaminants and the additions of other substances to food that does not unfairly impact upon small-scale processors.

Related submissions:

USC Canada (National)
 Union Paysanne (Quebec)
 Region of Waterloo Public Health (ON)
 FarmStart (ON)
 Food Secure Canada/People's Food Policy (National)
 Equiterre (QC)
 Arctic Institute of Community-Based Research (Yukon)
 Dietitians of Canada (National)
 National Farmers Union (Canada)

Manitoba Food Matters / Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (MB)
Participatory Action Research and Training Centre on Food Security (NS)
Oxfam Canada (National)
Squamish foodies (British Columbia)
Harriet Friedmann (ON)
Abra Brynne (BC)
Heather Passmore (BC)
Melanie Sommerville (BC)
Sharon Rempel
Nadine Ijaz (BC)
Jackie Ingram, (BC)
Jan Steinman, (BC)
Tom Marcantonio (ON)

Associated suggested site visits:

Gatineau-area (QC)
Petite Nation, QC (near Ottawa)
Waterloo, ON
Guelph, ON
Vancouver, BC
Old Crow, Yukon
Saskatoon, SK
Regina, SK
Vancouver, BC
Winnipeg, MB
Northern Manitoba
Squamish, BC
Small meat production: Salt Spring Island Agricultural Alliance, Salt Spring Island Meat Producers Group, Turkey farmer Margaret Thomson, Night Owl Farm, organic, beef farmer Gavin Johnston, Sheep farmers Mark & Rosalee Cook, Nova Scotia

4. Governance and the right to food

The Canadian government has opposed recognition of the right to food as an enforceable human right subject to effective judicial or administrative remedies in both international and domestic fora in recent years. The increasing prevalence of hunger in the midst of affluence in Canada is inextricably linked to Canada's refusal to recognize the right to food as an enforceable right requiring legislative and constitutional protection². Not only have governments in Canada imposed unprecedented cuts to benefits and coverage in social programs and income support, they have also removed effective remedies to violations of the right to food and ignored repeated recommendations from UN human rights bodies, Senate and House of Commons committees urging the implementation of rights-based strategies to address poverty and hunger in Canada. The absence of effective rights-based approaches to hunger and poverty, and consistent failures of Canadian governments to respond to and implement recommendations from UN human rights bodies are central to the failures of governments to address the crisis of hunger and poverty in Canada.

UN Human Rights Bodies Recommendations Ignored: In its most recent review of Canada in 2006, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) found that even after significant economic growth and reduced unemployment, poverty and hunger had increased. The CESCR expressed concern that:

- more than 2 million people, or more than 7% of the population, suffers from food insecurity;
- in most provinces and territories, social assistance benefits are lower than a decade ago and do not provide adequate income to meet basic needs for food, clothing and shelter;
- welfare levels are often set at less than half the Low-Income Cut-Off. (par. 21)
- minimum wages are insufficient to enable workers and their families to enjoy a decent standard of living; and,
- poverty rates are particularly high among marginalized groups such as Aboriginal peoples, African Canadians, immigrants and persons with disabilities, youth, low-income women and single mothers

² The Government of Canada has generally affirmed its support for the right to food in international fora, and supports the progressive realization of the right to food as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living. However, Canada has not agreed to the provision of effective legislative, administrative or constitutional remedies for those whose right to food is violated, as has been urged by UN treaty bodies - except where the violation of the right to food involves a discriminatory distinction. Canada has taken the position that the progressive realization of the right to food and other social and economic rights is a matter for government policies and programs rather than for legislative, constitutional or judicial protection. For this reason, Canada has refused to ratify the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR, which would provide victims of violations of the right to food with access to adjudication of their claims before the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights when a domestic remedy has not been available. Canada also refused to accept a number of recommendations during its first Universal Periodic Review in 2008 that it adopt a rights-based national strategy to reduce poverty, and that it provide more effective remedies in domestic law for violations of economic, social and cultural rights such as the right to food.

Similar concerns have increasingly dominated reviews by other treaty monitoring bodies. The UN Human Rights Committee has expressed concern about the discriminatory consequences of social program cuts on groups such as women, children, people with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples.³ Other treaty monitoring bodies – the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) – have also noted the disparate effects which cuts to social programs have had on marginalized groups.

Treaty monitoring bodies have made important, concrete and realistic recommendations for addressing the crisis of poverty and hunger in Canada, including to:

- ensure that minimum wages are increased throughout Canada to a level enabling workers and their families to enjoy a decent standard of living;
- address the needs of part-time and temporary workers for unemployment insurance and improved labour protections;
- establish social assistance at levels which ensure the realization of an adequate standard of living for all, reviewing all retrogressive measures taken in social assistance programs since 1995; and
- adopt a national strategy for the reduction of poverty that integrates economic, social and cultural rights that includes “measurable goals and timetables, consultation and collaboration with affected communities, complaints procedures, and transparent accountability mechanisms, in keeping with Covenant standards.”⁴

There is no effective procedure in Canada for following up on these important concerns or implementing recommendations of human rights bodies. As the CESCR noted in 2006, “despite the consultations and sharing of information between federal, provincial and territorial governments through the federal/provincial/territorial Continuing Committee of Officials on Human Rights, effective procedures to follow-up on the Committee’s concluding observations have not been developed.” Recommendations for addressing the inadequate domestic implementation of human rights commitments were central to Canada’s first Universal Periodic Review in 2008, and Canada accepted recommendations to consider new procedures for follow-up and implementation. However, there has been little or no progress on implementing this commitment.

Recommendations from Senate and House of Commons Committees – The Need for a National Rights-Based Strategy to Reduce and Eliminate Poverty: The Government of Canada has not only ignored crucial recommendations from UN human rights bodies. It has also ignored recommendations from its own parliamentary committees for concerted action on poverty. In 2009, the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, released its report, *In from the Margins: A Call To Action On Poverty*,

³ Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations: Canada CCPR/C/CAN/CO/5 (2006) paras. 17, 24.

⁴ United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2006, Concluding Observations: Canada. E/C.12/CAN/CO/4 & E/C.12/CAN/CO/5 at para 62.

Housing and Homelessness. Reporting on its extensive hearings, the Subcommittee noted:

Whether the subject was poverty, housing or homelessness, many witnesses described the problems in terms of rights denied. Pointing to both domestic human rights legislation and international commitments made by Canada to United Nations declarations and conventions, these witnesses identified the failure of governments to live up to these obligations, and the importance of providing access for individuals to hold governments accountable and to claim rights in appropriate courts and tribunals.⁵

The Subcommittee recommended measures to enhance the ability of people living in poverty to claim their rights and suggested that the federal government, “explicitly cite international obligations ratified by Canada in any new federal legislation or legislative amendments relevant to poverty, housing and homelessness.”⁶

In 2010, following up on the recommendations by the Senate Subcommittee, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA Committee) held hearings and issued a report on the need for a federal poverty reduction plan.⁷ The Report notes, “rates of family and child poverty are unacceptably high taking into account Canada’s high quality of living standard.” The Committee made wide-ranging recommendations for change, insisting that measures, “... be set within a human rights framework, specifically the recognition that governments have a duty to enforce socio-economic and civil rights.”⁸

The Committee noted that witnesses made it clear “the Government of Canada should also be compelled to act from a human rights perspective” when addressing Aboriginal poverty.⁹ It recommended the federal government, “endorse the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and implement the standards set out in this document.”¹⁰ The Committee also emphasized the importance of ensuring that measures to reduce poverty among people with disabilities are linked to human rights protections, including the recently ratified *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD)¹¹

The central recommendation of the HUMA Committee was for a rights-based federal action plan for the reduction of poverty. In the Committee’s view:

⁵ Senate, Subcommittee on Cities of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *In from the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness* (December 2009) (Chair: Honourable Art Eggleton, PC) at 15 [Senate, *In from the Margins*].

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Parliament of Canada, House of Commons, Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, *Federal Poverty Reduction Plan: Working in Partnership Towards Reducing Poverty in Canada* (November 2010).

⁸ *Ibid* at 2.

⁹ *Ibid* at 163.

¹⁰ *Ibid* at 164.

¹¹ *Ibid* at 134.

This action plan should incorporate a human rights framework and provide for consultations with the provincial and territorial governments, Aboriginal governments and organizations, the public and private sector, and people living in poverty, as needed, to ensure an improvement in lives of impoverished people.¹²

... Witnesses recommended that a federal poverty reduction act should include a clause requiring that the Government of Canada develop and regularly update a federal action plan to reduce poverty (e.g., every five years) and that this plan should include specific goals and timelines to reduce poverty in Canada (e.g., reduce poverty by half by 2020).¹³

In response to these and other reports (including a 2008 Senate committee report on rural poverty specifically), the federal government has simply released several short documents outlining existing policies and programs. While some progress has been made over the past few years to prevent or reduce poverty (e.g. creation of an earned income tax credit for low income Canadians, implementation of a work-sharing program during the recent recession, continued federal funding to support affordable housing), the federal government has been unwilling to take major steps to significantly decrease the incidence of low income and social exclusion.

Protections of the Right to Food in Inter-Governmental Agreements: As a federal state in which provinces and territories have jurisdiction over many areas affecting the right to food, inter-governmental agreements are important sources for the protection of the right to food. For thirty years, from 1966-1996, the right to food enjoyed significant protection in Canadian law through the *Canada Assistance Plan Act (CAP)*. Under CAP, in order to be eligible for federal cost-sharing of social assistance programs, provinces were required to provide financial assistance to any person in need to cover “basic requirements” including food. Individual remedies were also available under CAP.

As the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights noted in Canada’s 1998 review, the revoking of CAP in 1996, and its replacement by the Canada Health and Social Transfer, removed a critical element of the protection in Canadian law of the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food.¹⁴ In 1998 the CESCR recommended that Canada implement a “legally enforceable right to adequate assistance for all persons in need.” (1998, para. 40). In 2006, noting the absence of any follow-up to this and other crucial recommendations for effective domestic remedies, the CESCR reiterated its concern about “[t]he absence of a legally enforceable right to adequate social assistance benefits for all persons in need on a non-discriminatory basis ...” (2006, para. 11). There is still no requirement in any province of Canada that social assistance rates be set at a level that reasonably covers the cost of food and other requirements.

¹² *Ibid* at 96.

¹³ *Ibid* at 102.

¹⁴ United Nations. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. 1998. Concluding Observations: Canada. E/C.12/1/add.31 at para. 19.

Constitutional Protection of the Right to Food: As noted by Justice L’Heureux Dubé of the Supreme Court of Canada, “Our *Charter* is the primary vehicle through which international human rights achieve a domestic effect ... In particular, s. 15 [the equality provision] and s. 7 [which guarantees the right to life, liberty and security of the person] embody the notion of respect of human dignity and integrity.”¹⁵ Enhanced constitutional protection of the right to food in Canada relies on courts and governments interpreting these and other provisions of the Charter consistently with the right to an adequate standard of living including adequate food. Louise Arbour, the former UN High Commissioner of Human Rights and a former Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada has stated that through appropriate interpretations of the Charter, ‘the potential to give economic, social and cultural rights the status of constitutional entitlement represents an immense opportunity to affirm our fundamental Canadian values, giving them the force of law.’¹⁶

Both the Supreme Court of Canada in its jurisprudence and the Government of Canada (in submissions to UN Treaty Bodies) have stated that the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* can be interpreted as guaranteeing the right to the means necessary for an adequate standard of living as protected by the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. However, Attorneys General in Canada (at both the federal and provincial level) have consistently argued in Canadian Courts that the Constitutional protections of the ‘right to life, liberty and security of the person’ (s. 7 of the *Charter*), the right to equality (s. 15 of the *Charter*) and the constitutional commitment by both levels of government to the provision of ‘essential public services of reasonable quality’ (s. 36(1)(c) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*) are not a legal basis for Canadians to ensure they can enjoy their social and economic rights—including the right to food.

The case of *Gosselin v. Quebec* is the only case to have been granted leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada in which the highest Court has considered an allegation that inadequate levels of social assistance, forcing recipients to scavenge for food in dumpsters, violated the right to life and security of the person under the *Canadian Charter*. The Government of Quebec was supported in that case by other provincial governments in arguing that there is no right under the *Canadian Charter* to an adequate level of financial assistance to cover food and other necessities. Governments have taken this position in many other cases in lower courts as well.

The CESCR has emphasized its ongoing concern about “the practice of governments of urging upon their courts an interpretation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms denying protection of Covenant rights, and the inadequate availability of civil legal aid, particularly for economic, social and cultural rights.” (CESCR 2006, par. 11). The CESCR also expressed concern about the cancellation of the Court Challenges program, which provided funding for test case litigation under the Charter for equality

¹⁵*R. v. Ewanchuk* [1999] 1 S.C.R. 330 at para. 73.

¹⁶ L. Arbour, “Freedom From Want” – From Charity to Entitlement’, LaFontaine-Baldwin Lecture, Quebec City (2005), p. 7, available at: www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/0/58E08B5CD49476BEC1256FBD006EC8B1?opendocument

cases. Funding cuts to human rights advocacy organizations as well as to programs such as the Court Challenges Program have made it increasingly difficult for those who suffer violations of the right to food to access courts to seek effective remedies.

Human Rights Legislation: Another area of ongoing concerns among treaty monitoring bodies has been the inadequate protections of economic, social and cultural rights in Canada under federal and provincial/territorial human rights legislation. The CESCR has been recommending since 1993 that all human rights legislation in Canada be extended to include these rights. In its 2006 Concluding Observations, the CESCR again urged “federal, provincial and territorial governments to expand protection in human rights legislation to include social and economic rights and to protect poor people in all jurisdictions from discrimination because of social or economic status.”¹⁷

Even under existing human rights legislation in Canada, there is room for more engagement by human rights commissions with issues related to the right to food. Existing legislation covers issues of inequality and discrimination in services, housing and employment. Yet there has been almost no attention given to the serious inequalities that exist in relation to the right to food.

“Silo” Approach and the Right to Participation: Food and agriculture policies are fragmented and “siloed” among government jurisdictions and food and agriculture sectors. This means interactions between the various parts of the food system are routinely overlooked. Consequently, many proposed solutions to existing problems neglect or ignore root causes of existing problems. Furthermore, there are few formal processes, particularly at the federal level, to ensure public participation in the ongoing development of food policy, let alone the participation of low-income and marginalized people. Meanwhile, policies, programs and institutions which do provide some food security and food sovereignty to Canadians, and which provide a voice to food producers, such as the Canadian Wheat Board and supply management, are under threat by the federal government.

The primary decision-makers in our food system are industry and provincial and federal governments in support of industry. This is failing the great majority of Canadians. It is essential that decisions about the food system are inclusive and genuinely participatory, and that they include all stakeholders, including marginalized and food insecure populations.

A systems-based approach requires a diversity of voices in all policy development, and emphasizes the values of interdependence, ecology, health and justice over those of profit and individualism. This kind of approach to policy development was recently highlighted by rural women in Canada. In a participatory study (one of the largest studies of this kind) conducted with 105 rural women from five provinces, women discussed the numerous barriers they face in policy development as they remain conspicuously absent in consultation processes organized by the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Women emphasized that a Canadian agriculture policy should rest on four

¹⁷CESCR, Concluding Observations on Canada, E/C.12/1/Add.31 (10 December 1998) at para. 51.

pillars: financial stability; domestic food production and consumption; strengthen social and community infrastructure; and safe, healthy food and environment. They stressed that the food system is not designed first and foremost to feed Canadians, let alone to support the health of Canadians and our environment. This needs to change.

Once again, Canadians working in various food movements have come together to propose alternative ways forward on governance issues – initiatives that demonstrate the value in systems-based thinking within inclusive and participatory processes. Across Canada, there is a burgeoning interest in the establishment of Food Policy Councils. Food Policy Councils are inter-disciplinary spaces where citizens and government come together to take a comprehensive and integrated look at local food systems, and work together to make positive changes. They are models of inclusive systems-based approaches to food policy and programs. They work to increase collaboration across government jurisdictions, social sectors and geographies; develop and implement multi-level organizational structures; recognize and support initiatives contributing to “diverse economies”; and include community-based, traditional and scientific knowledge. The Toronto Food Policy Council was the first food policy council in Canada. Founded in 1991, the establishment of the TFPC was very much premised on the idea that food and health are intimately intertwined, and that more cross-sectoral, collaborative, inclusive approaches to food policy and planning to address the “siloed” approach are required. Ten years ago, Toronto adopted a Food Charter, entrenching food rights in a Charter adopted by the City Council and thereby formalizing the city’s role to fulfill the right to food for Torontonians.

Other local governments, such as in Waterloo, Ontario, are working with civil society and local institutions to build innovative and comprehensive approaches to healthy community food systems. This is being done by working with community partners to identify issues that are important to health (broadly defined) and building capacity over time for these partners to address these issues. The resulting comprehensive plan includes: local food systems research, integrating food access provisions into official regional plans, protecting land for agricultural use, neighbourhood produce stands, community nutrition worker program, community garden networks, Foodlink linking buyers and producers, community-supported agriculture, school nutrition policies, institutional procurement plans, toolkits on healthy eating, and more.

Achieving the goal of a participatory, ecological, and just food system that provides enough healthy, acceptable and accessible food for all requires open, democratic, and transparent governance processes. These processes will acknowledge current barriers to participation and strengthen mechanisms to overcome them. Recognizing that the food system is an interactive, interdependent web of relationships, it is necessary to engage government at all levels, including current municipal, provincial and federal decision-making processes, as well as international and global forums.

Food Safety Issues: There has been insufficient government regard for safety issues related to aspects of food production in Canada – particularly in relation to GMOs and pesticide residues. While other countries are addressing issues of serious contamination

by Roundup and similar products, there has been little attention to these issues by Canadian governments.

Bilateral trade rules governing the import of food into Canada from the United States could result in weaker standards of food safety for Canadians. During the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) negotiations in 2005, Canada was reportedly required to relax toxic chemicals regulation as part of the deal's harmonization requirements. During the negotiation it was revealed that US agricultural producers were pushing Canada to raise the limits on pesticide residue in food. A recent cross-border agreement between the two countries (December 2011) was designed to facilitate cross-border flow of goods. Observers caution that it may result in reduced labeling requirements and removal of restrictions on GMO food exported from the US into Canada. The Government of Canada did not carry out a human rights impact assessment before entering either of these agreements.

Government budget cutbacks on food inspection at factories, border entry points and elsewhere have also had a serious retrogressive effect on food safety in Canada. For instance in August 2011, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency announced it would cease meat inspection at provincial facilities in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba by January 2014. As a result, meat from these facilities could fall below acceptable standards and be of lesser quality than meat enjoyed in other Canadian provinces. The CFIA inspects meat for various contaminants including E.Coli, listeria, salmonella, which could be life threatening if eaten.

Related submissions:

Charter Committee on Poverty Issues (National)
Nova Scotia Legal Aid (NS)
Food Secure Canada (National)
Toronto Food Policy Council (ON)
People's Food Policy (National)
Dieticians of Canada (National)
Winnipeg Harvest (MB)
Region of Waterloo Public Health (ON)
Melanie Sommerville (BC)
Aimee Watson (BC)

Associated suggested site visits:

Toronto, ON
Waterloo, ON

5. Canada and the right to food internationally (extra-territorial obligations)

The world is faced with unprecedented challenges when it comes to food and agriculture. Hunger is on the rise. More than 1 billion people are unable to access the food they need for a healthy life. Over three-quarters of these people are rural food producers and workers. Climate change threatens to make things much worse, with a predicted decrease to global agricultural yields by as much as 16 per cent before the end of this century. In a globalized economy, Canadian policies on agriculture and food are affected by and have an impact on the rest of the world. Canada's trade and investment relationships, energy policy, foreign aid (both short-term food aid and long-term development assistance), corporate behaviour internationally, and role in multilateral processes all have a direct impact on global hunger.

It has never been more vital for international policy and cooperation to focus on ensuring resilient and equitable food production systems, access to safe food for all, decent livelihoods for food producers, and long-term environmental sustainability. These should be the guiding objectives of Canada's international policies. Unfortunately, Canadian aid, trade, multi-lateral and international business policies remain stuck in a policy paradigm, pursued by most governments over the past few decades, that privileges free trade, industrial agriculture for export, and corporate control. This has come about through policies that promote the production of cash and non-traditional export crops at the expense of domestic food production; removed subsidies for staple food production; dismantled commodity price controls on staples; eliminated mechanisms and programs that helped make small-scale production viable; and reduced the availability of credit (where it existed) to local farmers. This was achieved through such measures as structural adjustment programmes, trade agreements, and agreements that apply intellectual property rights to life forms as well as many others.

The Canadian government's stance at the international level has undermined the right to food internationally, including the ability of small holder farmers and food producers in the South to make a living while building their own food systems that are sustainable and based on their own food choices.

Key issues:

Canada's role in the international trade arena: Canada is a major exporter of food, including grain, oilseeds and meat products. These food exports can contribute to greater food security in food-insecure countries, but only if our exports do not undermine local producers and the markets they rely upon for their survival. Canadian policies on trade and investment have a profound impact on global food security and seriously risk undermining Canada's global food security objectives. While the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)-led *Food Security Strategy* aims to improve the viability of smallholder farming in developing countries, the Government of Canada advances policies in multilateral and bilateral trade negotiations – such as the rapid liberalization of agricultural tariffs – that would undercut the viability of smallholders. Canada also

promotes the importation and adoption of genetically-modified organisms, which has negative implications for farmers' rights to save and re-use seeds, as well as for biodiversity.

Canadian corporate activity internationally:

Mining: The Canadian government has been promoting Canadian mining investments overseas within the context of weak host state governance and the absence of legislation or other measures within Canada that would help to ensure that Canadian companies operating overseas respect the right to food of mine-affected communities, and of the closely related right to water, which is considered especially important in the case of peasant farmers. Canada has also lobbied against the right to water on the international stage.

Metal mining operations require tremendous amounts of water, which even if managed well can have lasting impacts on surrounding water supplies and environment. Surface water supplies may also dry up or become contaminated through leaks or spills from tailings dams. Mine-affected communities, such as those in the countries highlighted below, have spoken out about actual or potential impacts on agricultural lands, cattle, public health, and availability of clean or sufficient water supplies.

In Latin America, documented examples of potential violations of the right to food of Indigenous Peoples and peasant farmers involving Canadian mining operations have been found in Guatemala, Honduras, and Ecuador. There are also examples in the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Mongolia.

Land grabs: Purchase or lease of large areas of fertile agricultural lands in poor countries by transnational companies and sovereign wealth funds has mushroomed since the sharp rise in food prices in 2008. In all too many countries, the livelihoods and right to food of men and women living on those lands have routinely been violated, as governments welcoming any and all investment have facilitated rather than regulated these land grabs. While Canada may not be one the main drivers of this global phenomenon, the Canadian corporate and banking sector do appear to be increasingly investing in land abroad, and the Canadian Government has been playing a largely negative role in multilateral attempts to limit land grabs and protect land tenure of local communities.

At the policy level, the Government of Canada has played a largely negative role in the first two rounds of the Committee Food Security-led intergovernmental negotiations on the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests*. Civil society participating in the negotiations considered Canada to be one of the most active blockers in this process, in particular because of its position on water, on the Right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and on the principle of consultation of affected communities more generally. The Canadian Food Security Policy Group, a network of approximately 20 Canadian civil society organizations working on food security, will be launching a research project on the Canadian dimensions of the global land grab phenomena in January 2012. The objective of the research is to

determine the nature and scope of Canadian involvement in large-scale acquisitions of land in developing countries, to find out who the main actors are, where the financing for these investments is coming from, what purpose the land is being purchased for, and how the phenomenon compares to Canadian investment in the extractive sector. The research will also look into how Canadian federal policies and regulations encourage or discourage these types of investments. The preliminary results of this research should be available in May 2012.

Canada's international assistance (aid) program: Canada's ODA Accountability Act (Bill C-293, passed in 2008), specifies that all of Canada's ODA (Official Development Assistance) should, *inter alia*, be consistent with international human rights standards, and that government Ministers who administer ODA should report annually on compliance with this act. The government has reported annually as per the act, but in its review of the 2010-2011 report, CCIC (Canadian Council for International Cooperation) asserts, "the Report continues to fail to fulfill the Act's spirit and intention". CCIC calls CIDA's human rights approach "minimalist and inadequate" in CIDA's assertion, without evidence, that none of CIDA's projects will result in human rights violations. It appears that CIDA desires to respect human rights, but does not recognize any responsibility to protect or fulfill.

Policy coherence in international policy: Canada's Food Security Strategy, announced in 2009, aims to increase food security for the poor in developing countries. Though it does not mention human rights or the right to food directly, CIDA asserts that all activities of the strategy are in compliance with the ODA Accountability Act, which includes adherence to international human rights standards.

However, as noted above, Canadian international policy in fact asserts precedence of trade agreements over other international agreements. Canada's international actions on trade and investment clearly indicate that development goals (including food security for the poor) appear to be subservient to domestic interests. For example:

- a) The Free Trade agreement between Canada and Columbia has been criticized for hitting small-scale farmers with low-price competition, and may further expose Indigenous People, Afro-Colombians and rural dwellers to land grabs by Canadian mining companies equipped with powerful new investor rights
- b) Canadian representatives at the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in October 2011 blocked progress toward adoption of the *Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests*
- c) Canadian representatives at the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in October 2011 blocked meaningful inclusion of key issues such as biofuels and trade in the discussion on food price volatility.

New Food Assistance Convention: The 1999 Food Aid Convention has been under renegotiation since January 2011, and the draft treaty text was agreed in early December. It is reported that the draft treaty text will be submitted for ratification early in 2012 and that the text should become available at that time. This treaty, which provides a global safety net to provide food in emergencies, should be linked to need as proposed by the Special Rapporteur in his 2009 report “The role of development cooperation and food aid in realizing the right to adequate food: moving from charity to obligation”. With regard to the Right to Food specific questions related to predictability, transparency, accountability, participation, non-discrimination and empowerment should be asked in reviewing the text of the new treaty. It would be appropriate for the Special Rapporteur to meet with Canadian officials and Canadian NGOs working with food assistance to hear their comments on the draft treaty.

Canada’s actions on climate change and the right to food: Human induced climate change violates the human right to food, particularly in those eco-systems that are most vulnerable to change. These include the Arctic (in Canada but also in other territories in the circumpolar region), and countries on and around the tropics. Canada committed to reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions under the Kyoto Accord, but failed to comply. Canada has now announced it is leaving the treaty altogether with no proposal for how it will start to make good on its commitments to reducing emissions nor how it will support other countries, most of them much poorer than Canada, in their now necessary adaptation strategies to cope with the climate changes now in progress.

Related submissions:

Canadian Foodgrains Bank (National)
MiningWatch Canada (National)
Food Secure Canada/People’s Food Policy (National)
USC Canada (National)
Oxfam Canada (National)

EXAMPLES OF CIVIL SOCIETY POLICY PROPOSALS

Civil society is advancing a wide range of policy proposals to build a healthy, fair and ecologically sound Canadian food system. Not everyone within civil society would agree with each of the proposals below, and many more are missing than are included. The following are presented as an example of the range and depth of civil-society based policy proposals that came in with the submissions, from coast to coast to coast.

Hunger, poverty and the right to food:

- Enact a federal poverty prevention and elimination strategy featuring a Guaranteed Annual Income for all Canadians. This includes a guaranteed liveable minimum wage, and a systematic review and recalibration of both federal and provincial/territorial income assistance programs to ensure all Canadians can afford to access adequate amounts of culturally-appropriate healthy food as well as other basic needs such as shelter. This strategy, with measurable targets and timelines, should be developed in consultation with municipal and provincial/territorial governments, business, the non-profit sector, and individual Canadians – specifically low-income and marginalized populations. The program must include an effective affordable housing strategy to ensure that Canadians no longer have to choose between paying rent and buying food.
- Devote resources to research and development for a public food system that guarantees universal access to adequate amounts of healthy, safe and appropriate food for all. This may include, for example, establishing local procurement policies (from urban agriculture and nearby farms) for institutions such as hospitals, schools, universities, correctional facilities, care homes, legislatures, and government offices. Mandates at the municipal level would eliminate inner city food deserts by ensuring that locations for new grocery stores are determined by housing density, socioeconomic demographics, and current food access. Community initiatives such as food centres, collective kitchens, community gardens, and so on, would also be supported and funded.
- A key priority is the establishment of a national Children and Food Strategy. The federal government should work in partnership with provincial and territorial governments to create a cross-Canada Children and Food strategy to ensure that all children have access to the food required for health at all times. A hallmark of this strategy would be the provision of at least one meal during the school day providing food that is locally, ecologically, and ethically produced, safe to consume, nutritious, and culturally appropriate. This would include federal funding to seed, support, and link innovative (often grassroots) school food initiatives with a view to create a universal school food program. The strategy would also promote “healthy school food systems” (including student gardens, processing and composting programs) and would feature food and agriculture literacy programs beginning in pre-school to ensure students graduate

with an understanding of healthy food and how to access and prepare it. Once the strategy has been articulated, the federal government needs to allocate financial resources for its implementation. This strategy would also feature a ban on all forms of marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to children.

- Increase and strengthen urban food production by incorporating policy and program support for urban agriculture into provincial/territorial ministries of agriculture, supported by federal agricultural policy frameworks and resources. Enact policies to strengthen urban food production programs, such as assisting gardeners/farmers to access land in urban areas; providing education on small scale food production such as gardening, agriculture, and animal husbandry; linking gardeners/farmers to appropriate resources and equipment, researching small-scale food production, etc.
- Increase protection for agricultural and forest land to prevent loss to industrial, residential and recreational activities. All land protection must be inclusive of traditional food sources including hunting, gathering, fishing, and agriculture.
- Strengthen rural economies with supports for sustainable and innovative economic development initiatives (e.g., green energy, local living economy initiatives). Identify food as a priority area for small business development and employment training (e.g., Community Supported Agriculture, market gardening, local food co-operatives, etc).

Indigenous Peoples and the right to food:

- Land reform and redistribution - Return to the original nation-to-nation agreements as expressed in wampum belts, treaties, and other instruments that expressed Indigenous Peoples willingness to share the grand resources of the land. Allocate adequate land for the exclusive use of Indigenous Peoples hunting, fishing and gathering reserves in areas currently designated as crown land, national or provincial parks, and other public lands.
- Environmental degradation: Share in the urgent need to heal Mother Earth by integrating Indigenous customary law, which is harmony with natural law, with western science and legislation at all levels of government. Allocate adequate resources (time, human, financial and technical) to the process of adapting existing Canadian legislation to include the application of holistic Indigenous methodologies in assessing, preventing, monitoring and mitigating cumulative risks associated with the environmental, cultural, spiritual, and social health of Indigenous land and food systems.
- Address social determinants of health that are negatively impacting the ability of Indigenous Peoples (on and off reserve) to respond to their own needs for healthy culturally adapted Indigenous foods, i.e.: poverty, lack of affordable housing, culture and language, family healing, etc.

- Responsibility and relationships: Heal and rebuild (reconcile) contemporary relationships between Indigenous Peoples, and stakeholders (Canadian citizens and their government) and others who share the gifts of this great land we know as Canada. This will be accomplished by clearly integrating our shared world-views and outlining and articulating responsibilities, while in the process supporting the protection, conservation, and restoration of Indigenous and other land and food systems.

Industrial food model and the right to food:

- Urban and rural, farmer and non-farmer education on the benefits of fresh, local, seasonal, appropriately costed and priced, and sustainably and ethically produced food. Such education should be delivered through both formal and informal channels: schools, universities, night courses at community colleges, online courses, citizen groups, kitchen-table meetings, flyers, websites, public broadcasters, articles, books, and blogs. Citizens want governments to direct tax dollars toward such programs. Further, tens-of-thousands of passionate, informed Canadians are eager to be part of this society-shifting education effort. The government needs to employ these people, create a new awareness, and thereby lay the groundwork for a Canadian food renaissance.

- Government agriculture policies must focus on net farm income, not on production- or export-maximization. Governments must set net income targets, craft strategies to attain those targets, and report on success. Our goal must be: Over a medium-term, most Canadian farm families should receive prices that cover their average costs of sustainable production and receive incomes that secure them as food producers. Governments should judge agricultural policy success or failure based upon those policies effects on net farm income. By that measure, current policies fail.

- Rebalance power between family farmers and the transnational corporations that control the other links in the food chain in order to attain a more equitable allocation of power and profit within the food system

- Make farmer entry and renewal programs and programs to support small farms core parts of any new federal/provincial/territorial agriculture policy frameworks; then work to monitor and ensure the effectiveness of such government policies. We must turn policies on paper into new farmers and young farmers on the land.

- Prohibitions on foreign, corporate, investor, and absentee ownership. Canadian food land must be owned and controlled, as much as possible, by those who live on and work that soil. Moreover, our taxation system could give preferential treatment to farmer owner-operators (and retired farm families who retain land) vs. non-farmer owners.

- Localize and decentralize the processing, inspection and storage of food destined for the local market. Develop approaches for inspection, processing and storage that are flexible,

responsive, and bureaucratically streamlined so that the unique needs of less industrial, more seasonal, and variable approaches of small-scale local producers are accommodated.

- Initiatives contributing to a diverse economy must be recognized and supported, including new economic approaches that value ethics of interdependence, sustainability, health and justice over those of profit and individualism. For example, Canada's hundreds of food-coops create better markets for producers and provide higher quality food for consumers.

- Support the emergence and mobilization of local knowledge related to food production and preparation. Establish community-based knowledge exchange hubs that facilitate the exchange of food knowledge, information, and ideas across cultural and generational lines.

- Community programs that enhance food security should be supported with stable public funding for core operations. Funding that supports capacity building and system redesign should be the top priority. The relationship between food, health and education would support such funding being allocated through health and education agencies via federal-provincial transfer payments.

- Government policy at all levels must be re-oriented and harmonized to support healthy eating for all Canadians, from breastfeeding onwards. Better integration is required in planning and budgeting, and between our departments of Agriculture, Trade, Environment, and Health. For instance, the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Growing Forward II policy framework for 2013-2018 and the Health Accord must support each other in re-orienting agricultural policy towards greater health for all Canadians.

Governance and the right to food:

- Establish food policy councils/roundtables to work with governments at all levels (municipal, provincial/territorial, and federal) on policies to achieve social justice, ecological resilience and sustainable livelihoods in Canada's food system. These must include representation from all food-related sectors, including health promotion, education, housing, environment, community-governed food programs, and the business of food from farmers to retailers, and must ensure full participation of dispossessed and marginalized people. Each council must be able to organize itself autonomously and establish its own working structures in line with the values and principles of accessibility, transparency, inclusivity and equality.
- All food policy needs to be grounded in an integrated analysis of the food system in its entirety. This is to ensure that solutions address root causes and avoid creating further challenges due to silo-based thinking. A "joined-up" national food policy linking all key issues that relate to food, perhaps under a Minister of

Food, would be a very positive step forward. Any national food policy process must include civil society, low income and marginalized people, and must include existing national food policy processes such as the People's Food Policy (a citizen-based initiative where 3500 Canadians took part in building what is now the most comprehensive national food policy being advanced in Canada today).

Canada and the right to food internationally (extra-territorial obligations):

- The priority for Canada's international food and agriculture policy should be on respecting, protecting and fulfilling the right to food, not increasing exports. Emphasis needs to be placed on compliance with international human rights legislation, such as the human right to food, water, Indigenous rights, women's rights, etc. As a practitioner of multilateralism, Canada should play an active role in improving governance and coherence between international food institutions and instruments, such as FAO, IFAD, WFP, and international research institutions. Canada should support a reformed Committee on World Food Security as the appropriate mechanism for coordination amongst these agencies.

- Access to productive resources, such as land, credit, farm inputs and market infrastructures remains vital to the survival of farming communities, as does genuine agrarian reform and state investment in rural infrastructures and agricultural services. But macroeconomic policies are locking present and future governments into commitments that prevent them from intervening to effectively support local ecological agriculture and small-scale farmers. Hence, these policies must be changed. Farming and food are far too important to be left to the vagaries of the 'market', and many farmers' movements and their allies are calling for food to be removed from international free trade negotiations altogether.

- Canada should increase foreign aid spending to support smallholders in their efforts to build sustainable rural communities. Canada's food security strategy should focus on smallholder peasant farmers (men and women), helping to promote resilient agriculture systems and rural livelihoods, while taking measures to change the institutions, policies and structures that erode them. Such a focus will help ensure the right to food is a central pillar of the CIDA's new thematic strategy. More specifically, Canada's food security strategy should demonstrate direct benefits to smallholder agriculture and rural livelihoods. The strategy should recognize and encourage the many functions of agriculture in rural areas, going beyond food production to include provision of environmental services, improved nutrition and incomes, employment for landless labourers, and its important role in sustaining local cultures.

- The rural poor are key actors that must be actively involved in deciding how best to reduce hunger and poverty. Local civil society (farmer organizations, non-governmental organizations) and communities play a crucial role in increasing food security and thus the Canadian government should support the participation of rurally-based farmer organizations and community-based civil society organizations in decision-making on agriculture and food policy. Also important is the support for agricultural services to

smallholders as well as appropriate technology and establishing local markets.

- Canadian food security policies and programming will promote resilient households and communities and have greatest impact if they support smallholder farmers' efforts to build resilient agricultural and food systems that are based on local solutions, able to feed communities, and are strong enough to withstand external pressures from industrial agriculture. As such, policies need to emphasize agro-ecological approaches that minimize green house emissions, improve the soil, and boost small-scale farmer resilience to external shocks including the effects of climate change.

- While the key role of women in food security is widely recognized, systemic gender discrimination means the poorest rural women are more likely to be malnourished, in ill health, and have limited control over productive resources (land, water, labour and inputs). Moreover, they rarely benefit from agriculture research and extension, have limited access to financial and insurance services, and benefit much less than their male counterparts in the agricultural marketplace. To ensure gender equity in agricultural development CIDA should adopt the following policies to strengthen the rights and participation of rural women:

- Support women's leadership capacity-building in rural organizations;
- Improve women's tenure over productive resources such as land and water;
- Support women's economic empowerment through training;
- Improve women's participation in, and access to, and control in local markets;
- Ensure the genuine participation of rural women and children in all food security interventions

- Measures that stabilize commodity markets and support fair prices for farmers should be promoted and defended. Canada should work with G20 countries to address speculation in commodity prices, which contributed to sharp price spikes in 2008 and pushed millions more people into hunger. Such measures should include greater oversight and regulation of financial liberalization and new financial instruments such as hedge funds. In the longer term, Canada should build alliances in support of international supply management approaches, including commodity agreements supported by sound national policies. Government support for the adoption and scaling-up of these and other policies and initiatives would provide a much-needed boost for long-term approaches that address poverty, inequality and hunger.

SITE VISIT PROPOSAL:

There is widespread interest in welcoming the Special Rapporteur and his team to many parts of the country. Almost every submission included at least one suggested site visit. However, the Coordinating Committee has been advised by the Special Rapporteur's staff that their best guess for the total length of site visits will be a minimum of three days, and a maximum of five. This is in addition to time in Ottawa.

Based on extensive feedback from across the country, the Coordinating Committee would like to strongly suggest that the Rapporteur consider extending his visit in Canada if he is to fully capture the issues blocking the full implementation of the right to food, due to the size of the country and the complexity of the issues, jurisdictional considerations, etc. There is a precedent for this as the Special Rapporteur on housing spent 13 days criss-crossing the country. We would also suggest the Rapporteur end (rather than start) his mission in Ottawa – so that he has already been exposed to key issues when he sits down with government and other officials.

While hoping for news of a longer visit, the civil society process has made some very difficult choices in attempting to elaborate a proposal that takes into account both the current time constraints of the Mission and the breadth of issues being suggested for investigation.

Based on the submissions received, and in an attempt to maximize time by making use of each location to highlight more than one issue, with 3-4 days, the Rapporteur could visit:

- Toronto: Roundtable with civil society (including community organizations, academics, human rights community, etc), roundtable with low-income people, visits to local community initiatives
- Winnipeg: Meetings with farmers, visits to low income (including Indigenous) communities, visits to local community initiatives
- One Northern Indigenous community from among those proposed (location dependent on what works best with overall itinerary)

With 5 days, the Rapporteur could very usefully add either a trip to British Columbia, or to Nova Scotia. We would also like to explore if we might add events to the Ottawa leg of the Rapporteur's trip, such as civil society roundtable, farm visits, community visits, etc, as well as discuss a trip to Montreal while the Rapporteur is based in Ottawa. In addition to the proposals received through this collaborative process from Quebec-based groups, there are others who have extended invitations to Montreal through independent submissions.

Finally, it would be useful to discuss invitations received through this process and otherwise at the same time, in order to build the most complementary and comprehensive itinerary possible.

Annex 1: Issues where submissions illustrated diverging perspectives

Differences of opinions were brought forward in the following submission areas (please note these are highly simplified and abbreviated synopses of complicated issues, and positions may be improperly represented):

- Food banks: Some submissions suggested that food banks be immediately closed down due to the potential for masking issues of hunger and poverty, and others underlined the very necessary role they play in meeting day to day urgent food needs. The text on food banks in this compilation does not go into this debate – instead focusing on the right to food and state obligation implications of charitable food services.
- Raw milk: Some submissions made a strong case for legalizing raw milk (with accompanying health and safety standards), while others within the dairy sector are opposed to the legalization of raw milk stating health concerns. The text on raw milk does not go into this debate – focusing instead on the implication of industrial food models on small-scale food production, with raw milk as one example.
- Supply management: Farmer-controlled marketing and protection for the domestic market are principles with elicited general support amongst the people and organizations that sent in submissions. However, there are disagreements over the form these should take. Some support the existing supply management models, while others feel the system often works to the disadvantage of smaller producers. Once again, the compilation document does not go into this debate.

Annex II: Resource List

Hunger, poverty and the right to food

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