

Human Rights and Healthy Diets

Does the food industry have a responsibility to respect the human right to adequate food and diet-related health?

A seminar hosted by FoHRC- Food, Human Rights and Corporations, the National Nutrition Council and FIAN Norway

Time: Thursday 8 December 2016

Part I : Open Morning Seminar 09:00 - 12:15

Part II: Technical Workshop Afternoon

**Where: Norwegian Centre for Human Rights,
Cort Adelers gate 30, Oslo**

PART I: Open Morning Seminar

- 08:30** Registration and coffee/tea
- 09:00** Welcome and introduction by **Wenche Barth Eide, Coordinator of FoHRC**
- 09:10** *UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the UNGP Reporting Framework*
Julie Schindall, Senior Advisor at Shift
- 09:40** Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), the law, and respect by the food industry for the human rights to adequate food and health. *The case of the WHO Recommendations on the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children.*
Professor Amandine Garde and Ben Murphy, Law & Non-Communicable Diseases Unit, University of Liverpool
- 10:10** Coffee/tea and fruits
- 10:30** *The Government's plan for healthier diets in Norway. What role does the industry play?*
Fredrik Wang Gierløff, State Secretary, Ministry of Health and Care Services
- 10:45** *Title to be confirmed*
Petter Haas Brubakk, Director General of Food Drink Norway, Confederation of Norwegian Enterprises
- 11:00** *Expectations to businesses - OECD Guidelines for responsible business conduct*
Cathrine Halsaa, Head of Secretariat, Norway's OECD National Contact Point
- 11:10** Video message from **Dr. Francesco Branca, Director of the Department of Nutrition for Health and Development, World Health Organization (WHO)**
- 11:20-12:15** Discussion with introductory remarks by **Stineke Oenema, Coordinator, UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN)**

Afternoon: PART II: Technical Workshop (by invitation)



FoHRC is an interdisciplinary research and action network, with representatives from the University of Oslo, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, FIAN Norway, and Redd Barna. FoHRC's institutional home is the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights.

Nasjonalt råd for Ernæring
National Nutrition Council



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Under international human rights law, everyone has a right to adequate food and to the highest attainable standard of health.

States are obliged to adopt appropriate measures to respect, protect and fulfil these rights, which can be done in many ways, including public health regulations through food legislation or restrictions concerning the marketing of food. But does the food industry also have a responsibility to respect the human rights to adequate food and diet-related health? It is clear that they have a duty to comply with existing regulations in the territory of the states where they operate, but does the food industry have a responsibility for healthy diets also when existing regulations are insufficient or totally absent because of the failure of the state to provide effective regulations?

Poor diets constitute the world's leading cause of early deaths, and account for 11 million deaths annually according to the 2013 Global Burden of Disease study. Undernutrition continues to take its tolls among young children, including by contributing to deaths from common infectious childhood diseases. With obesity on the rise, including in childhood, people are becoming further predisposed for non-communicable diseases like cancer, diabetes 2, and cardiovascular diseases.

Which obligations do governments have to protect their populations from unnecessary poor health? And what responsibility do food companies have with regards to promoting healthier diets?

Businesses across the world are encouraged by governments to follow the Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises developed by the OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The OECD Guidelines provide guidance for responsible business conduct in a global context. They have been updated to reflect also the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which were endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011, and which define the global standard for this particular area of business conduct.

This seminar will introduce the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, with reference also to the national action plans that have been adopted for the implementation of these principles. The seminar will in particular focus on the subsequent UNGP Reporting Framework for companies of all kinds, as developed by Shift and Mazars in 2015, following two years of global consultation. Many human rights can be impacted by business, and companies will wish to define and prioritise those rights at risk of the most severe negative impacts – the 'salient risks' – across their operations and value chains. Will food companies agree to respect the human rights to adequate food and health – and what would this imply in practice along the food chain from production to consumption? How can due diligence and reporting on practices by the corporate food sector be operationalised?

The seminar will especially explore the challenges to industry and governments to mitigate the accelerating global obesity epidemic among rich and poor. The challenges include both commitments to responsible food processing and ethical food marketing practices, to children in particular. What sector-specific frameworks and standards can guide reporting and necessary changes in the food business sector towards the consumer end of the spectrum?



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