**POLICY BRIEF ON SDG 2**

**End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition**

**and promote sustainable agriculture**

**Vision**

Zero hunger will be achieved when persons with disabilities have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life[[1]](#footnote-1).

**Introduction**

Hunger and food security intersects with poverty, exclusion and marginalization. Persons with disabilities are more susceptible to suffer from malnutrition and poverty may increase the risk of disability through malnutrition[[2]](#footnote-2). There is increasing awareness between the links between disability and food security[[3]](#footnote-3) and disability and malnutrition.[[4]](#footnote-4) Recent research indicates that “disability as emerged as one of the strongest known factors that affect a household’s food security.”[[5]](#footnote-5) The same research indicates that: “one-third of households with a working-age adult who was unable to work due to disability were food insecure and one-quarter of households that included a working-age adult with a disability that did not necessarily prevent employment were food insecure. In comparison, 12 per cent of households that had no working-age adults with disabilities were food insecure.”

Food security is not simply the availability of food. Food security is impacted by factors like gender (girls with disabilities may be fed less than others during hardships and food shortages[[6]](#footnote-6)) and disaster. The UN notes: *Many countries that failed to reach the target set as part of the Millennium Development Goals, of halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, have faced natural and human-induced disasters or political instability, resulting in protracted crises, with increased vulnerability and food insecurity affecting large parts of the population.*

Exclusion and marginalization also put persons with disabilities at risk for hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. Health and nutrition programs for the general population may not be accessible to persons with disabilities and their families (barriers include: physical accessibility, cost-prohibitive transportation, delivery through school system which may be excluding children with disabilities and so forth). Families supporting a family member with disability may not have access to information about feeding techniques and/or devices for children with disabilities who require feeding supports. Similarly, these devices may be cost prohibitive or unavailable[[7]](#footnote-7). Lastly, persons with disabilities who are institutionalized are often also overlooked in food programmes.[[8]](#footnote-8)

**Link to CRPD**

Alleviating hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture requires a broad view on the factors and barriers that put persons with disabilities and their families at risk. To address these issues, there must be a focus on equality and non-discrimination (article 5), gender equality (articles 6, 7), ensuring accessibility of programs (article 9), the ability to own and inherit property (article 12), an adequate standard of living (article 28).

**General Recommendations**

* Ensure access for persons with disabilities to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.
* Nutrition policy and programming, maternal and child health and disability policy should recognize and plan for the malnutrition and disability link with adequate resources and actions taken.
* Mainstream disability into food programmes, nutrition, and food security efforts.
* Ensure persons with disabilities benefit equally from mainstream food programmes and food security efforts.
* Ensure international cooperation efforts related to food imports to developing countries are not contributing to food insecurity by providing lower-grade foods.
* Address barriers and root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition that persons with disabilities and their families experience (namely: poverty and exclusion from communities).
* Provide information about and access to disability-specific feeding devices or specialized diets as required by persons with disabilities.

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1. Adapted from the definition of food security of the 1996 World Food Summit [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. World Disability Report. (2011). World Health Organisation & World Bank. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://www.worldhunger.org/disability-is-an-important-risk-factor-for-food-insecurity/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Groce, Challenger, Kerac. (2013). *Stronger Together: Nutrition-Disability Links and Synergies – Briefing Note*. Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre, University College London. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. http://www.worldhunger.org/disability-is-an-important-risk-factor-for-food-insecurity/ [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Groce et al. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Groce et al. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Groce et al. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)