

**Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Third Cycle Universal
Periodic Review**

**CURRENT SITUATION OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS
IN ETHIOPIA**

Submitted by

Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations

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I. Background

1. In the period after the previous UPR in 2014, Ethiopia has witnessed a period of immense political upheaval and socio-economic instability. More broadly, in response to the country's worsening economic crisis, the government has so far continued to prioritize short-term measures which fail to address the systemic dysfunctions in the country's economy and risk leading to significant retrogression in the realization of socio-economic rights.

2. This submission outlines the key concerns and recommendations of the listed organizations on the occasion of Ethiopia's review under the third cycle UPR. It aims to supplement information to be presented by the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) during its third Cycle UPR reporting, highlighting key issues regarding the government's compliance with its obligations under the Constitution and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). It makes particular reference to issues of compliance with obligations in respect to the right to work, education, health, water and sanitation, food and housing by the GoE.

II. Right To Work

3. Unemployment and underemployment, especially among young people, continues to be a driver of social unrest, yet the country has so far lagged behind in effectively designing and consistently implementing a national policy and strategy to promote enhanced job creation and move progressively towards the full realization of the right to work. High level of youth unemployment, even more prevalent in some highly populated regional states of the country like Oromia and Amhara, has played a major role (though not the sole cause) in the recent wide spread uprisings in most parts of the country.¹ Even if the coming into power of the new prime minister has contributed its part in giving some hope to the youth population and seemingly eased the aggravated unrests, the assurance for better protection of their rights still seems to be far from materialization in the minds of many and they are still pushing forward this unresolved agenda of unemployment by disrupting the operation of some undertakings. Given the notable high increase in the number of youth population in the country,² the economic costs of this situation are enormous. Unemployment figures, although high, do not really capture the full problem of joblessness in the country as international standards consider the unemployed to be those who are not working for at least one hour a week and actively searching for a job.

4. It is to be noted that Ethiopia has historically had a large workforce employed in the public sector either as a public servant or an employee of public enterprises predominantly owned or

¹Ethiopia's Crisis: What is Causing the Political Turmoil and Ethnic Tension? April 3, 2018 ECADAF (Ethiopian News and Views).

²Of Ethiopia's population, estimated at 104 million, 41 percent is under the age of 15. More than 28 percent is aged 15 to 29. Youth unemployment is estimated at nearly 27 percent, USAID Fact Sheet– Developing Ethiopia's Youth, July 2017.

managed by the public sector. Yet, the contraction of the public sector particularly through the privatization of most of the public enterprises coupled with colossal shortage in the foreign currency reserve of the country with its adverse impact on the private sector, especially the manufacturing sector of the country, is having a major impact on unemployment in Ethiopia.

5. As a result of a number of factors, rural-urban migration being the most important one, unemployment has been more prevalent in urban areas. But rural unemployment among the youth is still rampant and requires due attention from the government. Statistical reports indicate that the rural youth population is incomparably higher than the urban one and it constitutes 80 percent of the youth population in Ethiopia³. Yet more attention is being given to youth unemployment in urban and semi-urban areas. The need to, forthwith, roll-out a solid and comprehensive plan for increasing youth employment in both the urban and rural localities of the country is a pressing one.

6. Even though the causes and effects are different, relevant stakeholders do not separately consider the case of urban and rural unemployment. Since the rural youth is predominantly engaged in agriculture, the unemployment issue has to be considered from the point of view of access to rural land. While the Ethiopian constitution made land and natural resources out of the private domain, the overarching justification has been to create job opportunities to the landless youth by providing land by way of redistribution. However, such redistribution is not being done properly in many parts of Ethiopia. There are regions where it has not totally happened since the regime change in 1991. Even in regions where this has been done, two decades have already passed. This means the new generation does not have firsthand access to rural land which is the most significant means of livelihood and employment.

7. On the other hand, underemployment has long been and still Ethiopia's prime problem with secondary and university graduates. However, state policy dealing with unemployment does not seem to factor in the problem of underemployment. This is because though most graduates are employed in the informal sectors the vast majority of jobs created in such sector are characterized by have lack of job security, low productivity and thus low wages, and at the same time they do not meet the demand of secondary education and university graduates. In the context of its current unemployment crisis, though the state is expected to be able to act as employer of last resort until domestic private companies can create more jobs, such a course of action is not being followed by the Ethiopian government. Adding to this, Ethiopia could well be in store for even more job-destroying privatization and labor market deregulation.

8. With the wide-ranging expansion of access to education throughout the country in the past fifteen years, millions of Ethiopians have accessed higher education. The country produces hundreds of thousands of graduates from its existing universities which is unmatched with existing job opportunities. Considering the soaring individual, familial and social expectation that follows

³ Ethiopia's Demographic Profile 2018

completion of higher education, the subsequent unemployment and underemployment definitely causes some serious social problems in the country.

9. Even the majority of the employed do not make enough money to lead a dignified life. Especially in the relatively urbanized localities where rental and other household expenses are eye wateringly expensive, it is extremely challenging for young graduates to remain employed and start life independently.

10. Some effects of youth unemployment and underemployment that seem very relevant to the current condition in the country includes starvation of the youth and their family; inability to establish one's own family, vulnerability to substance abuse, hopelessness in education by the younger generation with its adverse impact on the future of the country, social unrest and instability.

11. Without prejudice to their positive contributions, the job opportunities made available by the *Youth Revolving Fund for Youth and the Federal Urban Job Creation* projects are far from adequate.

12. Ethiopia's ambitious five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (2010–2015) includes developing industrial cluster zones that are expected to open up employment opportunities and reduce unemployment considerably. However, many express dissatisfaction in the government's "mega projects" pointing that they require years to complete and are already considerably lagging behind than expected. More so, even if the government manages to complete most of these mega projects and they become operational, they would not have notable contribution towards reducing graduated youth employment as their actual operation requires less labor. Considering the huge number of graduates from the ever-opening higher educational institutions, the result would be that thousands will once again join the unemployed.⁴

13. Thus, rather than pushing forward the policy for expansion of mega projects that seems to be in a desperate situation, due emphasis should be given to sustained financing of existing small businesses in order to promote their expansion and growth towards increasing their capacity to accommodate a good number of the unemployed youth of the country. On top of that, an investment-friendly climate to attract domestic and foreign investors to labor-intensive technology industries should be accentuated. Further, improved access to infrastructures like reliable electricity and water supply, health facilities/hospitals/ and other social services and ensuring quality education is a starting point. Such interventions will mitigate urban migration and encourage young graduates to work in the rural parts of Ethiopia, which are currently in dire need of educated and skilled workers.

⁴ EBC reported of a recent survey in Addis Ababa indicating that there are 135,000 unemployed people in the city and close to 15% of whom are graduates of higher education institutions. However, the reality is that there are similar number of unemployed graduates in all regional states

14. The manufacturing sector is the largest source of employment in the country, without neglecting the need to give due emphasis to ensuring minimum labor standards, creating an enabling environment for the expansion of same should be prioritized by the central and regional governments. Active labor market policies as well as opening up more opportunities for youth graduating from higher learning institutions, especially for the long-term unemployed, should be prioritized.

15. *The following recommendations are proposed to address the concerns. The government should:*

- a) Give special attention to the most disadvantaged youth groups so as to curb the social and economic problems of the unemployed youth and the prevalent social injustice that is the main cause of unrest in the country;*
- c) Develop a coherent policy and strategy that aims at reducing the high unemployment and underemployment rates,*
- d) Introduce a minimum wage and strictly monitor and implement minimum labor standards in all sectors;*
- e) Introduce robust labor market policies and standards, especially for the long-term unemployed; and,*
- f) Introduce and expand specific measures to enhance job opportunities for both the rural and urban youth whether in public or private enterprises.*

III. Right to Health

16. Ethiopia, though known to be one of the countries committed to ensuring universal health coverage to citizens, is increasingly privatizing its health care system. With low health insurance coverage⁵, substantial portion of Ethiopian households end up spending a lot on out-of-pocket costs, depriving services to those who cannot afford them.

17. Though there are efforts to put in place a community based health insurance system that caters for the needs and priorities of poor households, neglect of the public healthcare sector is clearly visible in the low levels of public spending on health that ultimately resulted in compromised quality of services available in most health institutions operating at different levels.

18. Although health related national indicators are satisfactory in light of overall regional averages, there have been incidences of stagnation and backsliding and large discrepancies in access to health care between regions still remains to be a challenge. The distribution of healthcare services in Ethiopia is greatly imbalanced between urban and rural areas, raising questions about the accessibility of services. Although close to 80% of the population lives in rural areas, only small

⁵ It is indicated in GTP II that the government would give special attention for the implementation of the social health insurance system and for the improvement of quality health service delivery during its implementation period; National Planning Commission; The Growth and Transformation Plan II P. 44

proportion⁶ of the health institutions are located in these parts of the country. Although the country has undertaken an enormous expansion of health extension workers and health centers in terms of service delivery, it is estimated that only 75% of urban households and about 42% of rural dwellers are within walking distance from a health facility. There is also a large disparity in the distribution of human resources where only limited percentage of public sector physicians cover rural areas.

19. Emigration of trained and talented health professionals from the country, due to adverse domestic conditions such as the inability to advance professionally, the lack of educational opportunities to undertake more research and training, lower living standards, and uncertainty about the future, is the other critical factor affecting the availability adequate human resource in the health sector with broader adverse impact upon the health care system of the country. Though government has attempted to increase the number of institutions of higher education as well as homegrown teaching staffs to increase human resources in the sector, it becomes a daunting task for the country to satisfy the ever-increasing needs of the society. Against this backdrop, the effect of the outflow of skilled doctors and other medical professionals and its impacts on the health care system of the country is not emphasized in the design and implementation of government blue prints in this regard.

20. The health sector has also been subject to growing privatization. Public hospitals are struggling in the face of huge demand and the government's failure to keep up with escalating costs, financial shortages, inefficient use of resources, and ineffective management. The poor quality of public hospitals, in turn, has led to a lack of public confidence with people turning to the private sector. This has burdened most Ethiopians with more expenses and has also deprived services to those who cannot afford them.

21. Affordability of healthcare has been further affected by rising inflation in the recent past. Price increases are observed and at times even higher in rural areas, especially considering the limited accessibility of healthcare services and given the higher poverty rates among rural populations. This problem of affordability of healthcare services poses an imminent threat to the right to health of many vulnerable households, who found it immensely difficult to afford healthcare services. Similarly the cost of health care increased significantly as a percentage of family expenses due to the soaring inflation of the last three years. Such problems of affordability clearly have negative bearing on access to health care for many in the country.

22. As compared to most developing countries limited number of the population is benefiting from the health insurance schemes available at the public sector. Although there has been a gradual increase, it is still well below standards applicable for developing countries like Ethiopia. Though efforts are still underway to ensure health insurance coverage under the community-based health insurance scheme largely workers in the informal sector, self-employed, farmers, rural residents,

⁶ WHO Africa Region: Ethiopia; World Health Organization <https://afro.who.int/countries/ethiopia>

and women are without health insurance. Even the community health insurance scheme being implemented on a pilot phase continues to exclude workers in the informal sector.

Nevertheless, even those who are insured rarely resort to the public sector when in need of healthcare services, particularly for outpatient services due to the poor quality of public hospitals in the country.

23. The neglect of the public healthcare sector is clearly visible in the availability of insufficient resources and widespread corruption in the institutions managing health services in the country. Though there are commendable efforts to ensure universal health coverage to the population a lot is expected from the government to ensure affordable access to quality healthcare for everyone regardless of geography or income level. On top of that the government is not giving the required attention to the need to take urgent action to address the escalating cost of healthcare in the short term, while working to reduce out-of-pocket health expenditure in the longer term. The participation of local civil society, community groups and other stakeholders, is not effectively sought by the government in its efforts to provide universal health insurance. In a bid to advance its commendable reform programs in the health sector, the Ethiopian government should allocate ever-increasing resources to the sector, put in place effective mechanisms to enhance inter-sectoral coordination; and adopt concrete measures to address the significant geographic disparities in health-care provision, after conducting a proper stakeholder analysis.

24. Further, there are no complaints mechanisms for cases of clinical malpractice or infringements of patients' rights, with the exception of the general criminal proceedings and those who tried to utilize these avenues rarely achieve satisfactory outcomes mainly due to issues connected with availability of reliable expert evidences from responsible medical institutions.

25. It is therefore recommended that the government should ensure affordable access to quality healthcare for everyone in particular through:

- a) Taking urgent action to address the escalating cost of healthcare in the short term;**
- b) Taking appropriate measures to reduce out-of-pocket health expenditure in the longer term;**
- c) Exerting relentless efforts to provide universal health insurance in collaboration with concerned stakeholders;**
- d) Sustaining existing efforts through allocation of resources to the health sector;**
- e) Adopting targeted measures to address the significant regional disparities in health-care provision;**
- f) Prioritizing the development of policy and legal framework for access to redress in case of medical malpractice; and,**
- g) Introducing measures to increase qualified professionals and retain skilled labor in the medical field.**

IV. Right to Education

26. Despite overall improvements in educational indicators, disparities in educational standards among different parts of the country still remain to be a major problem. The short supply of all the necessary measures aimed at ensuring free and compulsory primary education still disadvantages students who cannot afford entry into the private school system, and exacerbates the problem of unequal access to education and reinforces the exclusion of poor and disadvantaged groups of children from educational advancement.

27. On the other hand, overall trends in school attendance have been improving and the country's net primary school enrollment stands at an impressive level. Unsurprisingly, however, there are disparities depending on gender and other causes of vulnerability like disability. Though there are some schools accommodating children with mental, hearing, and sight disabilities whose distribution is particularly limited to the capital city Addis and some of the regional state capitals, there are no such schools available for children with disabilities of any other sort. Moreover, there is still disparity in academic achievement among primary school children as children from poor households constituted only a small percentage of achievers in primary education, general secondary and in the preparatory stages.

28. The poor quality of public education, which is conceded by the government, remains a major challenge that hinders the capacity of children to develop to their full potential. Most primary educational institutions particularly those located in rural parts of the country are not fit for use and lack functional water and sanitation services; hence, do not meet the national standards for quality education. The pupil-to-class ratio still stands as an obstacle to quality education in these localities. Rigid conventional teaching methods that do not encourage participation are also affecting the quality of education.

30. Moreover, schools often lack safety and security standards, exposing children to different forms of health risks including violence. High rates of violence in class rooms and gender based violence in the school environment are still rampant.⁷

31. Furthermore, Ethiopian schools are constrained when attempting to improve quality of education due to their lack of access to adequate public funding. In attempt to improve the salary and benefit packages for teachers a salary increment, free transportation of public transport and subsidized rental of houses has been introduced by the government. However, still the teaching staffs in most parts of the country is not satisfied with the level of commitment in this regard and claiming it still remained below what they requested as well as calling for a larger budget for addressing demands in this regard. Increasing investment in education, so as to guarantee high quality public education as well as cost free primary education is still a concern as the required

⁷ Addressing school related gender based violence in Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Zambia and Ethiopia, A Cross-Country Report UCL Institute of Education, August 2017.

attention is not being given by the government for the need to increase investment in education at this level.

32. Most key stakeholders echo concern that due attention is not being given by the government to ensure equity across different socio-economic classes, and to intensify its monitoring over the condition of the teaching learning process through designing adequate strategies and implementation frameworks that take into account the needs and concerns of students.

33. *It is recommended that the Government of Ethiopia should:*

- a) Ensure that equitable attention is given across different regions and socio-economic classes for access to employment. In particular, policies and schemes targeting the poor and disadvantaged and the existing disparities in gender, disability, rural-urban, etc. should be designed;*
- b) Improve the standard of school conditions and services to create a fitting and enabling learning environment for all;*
- c) Intensify interventions to combat violence in schools and take measures towards ensuring a safe school environment;*
- d) Give particular attention to its monitoring over the condition of students through availing the necessary regulatory frameworks that would effectively address the needs and priorities of students; and,*
- e) Increase financial allocations to the education sector, so as to guarantee high quality public education, and give children the chance to enjoy their right to free primary education.*

V. Right to Housing

34. The heightened lack of affordable housing in Ethiopia particularly in urban areas of the country is largely attributable to inadequate public investment and rampant corruption in the construction sector of the country. Due to a number of factors government investment in the housing sector dropped significantly in recent periods. Statistics on the numbers of housing units built under projects managed and administered by the public sector and delivered to those beneficiaries of such schemes mirror this trend. At the same time, failure to adequately regulate the private sector, which is making the formal housing market inaccessible for many Ethiopians, is worth noting in this regard.

35. One of the important reasons for the housing crisis in Ethiopia is the absence of legislation promoting housing cooperatives as well as protecting buyers from real estate developers, or even guaranteeing access to affordable rental houses. The lack of regulatory framework for rental of particularly residential units is undermining security of tenure and affects peoples' ability to meet their housing costs. It should not come as a surprise that the reality of housing in Ethiopia is full of contradictions. Although the overall inventory of real estate developers as well as residential

units (housing supply) by them is increasing and would exceed the total need (housing demand) of the urban population in the near future, these units do not cater to the needs of low-income households. Instead, there is an excess of upper-middle income and luxury units, which would lead to the phenomenon of empty and closed residential units.

36. Although the government is implementing housing projects in different parts of the country/particularly in urban localities/ to house those with limited income, in many cases it is found to be a failure due to the corruption that characterized the inclusion of the not so efficient private sector in their execution. While the state paid subsidies allotted to the housing units, for reasons unexplained they are sold on at a very high prices, depriving the actual beneficiaries/low income citizens/ of affordable housing units. In addition to their non-compliance with building and planning regulations, some houses constructed under the condominium housing project suffer from lack of facilities, services and proper infrastructure. The results of this promising project have not been successful so far.

37. On the other hand, city development plan essentially envisages the demolishing of all slums in the capital Addis and the relocation of residents to new places. Official state policy is to give priority to areas where people's lives are under threat due to highly inadequate infrastructures and facilities. In reality, the demolishing of residential areas is being carried out in the name of re-development projects and to make the capital a more attractive international city. Hence, 'attractive' areas where the poor and marginalized are living are more likely to be prioritized, especially given that leasing land to investors is one of the main sources of income for the city government of Addis Ababa. Further, the relocation of people is being implemented in ways that fail to respect their rights; they are carried out in an arbitrary manner and when new residential buildings are actually built, they are in unsuitable locations with extremely underdeveloped infrastructures and facilities. Particularly in most of the cases the alternative accommodations provided do not have proper water and electricity services and the distance of the new locations as claimed by those relocated deprived many families of proper employment and livelihood opportunities.

38. A robust and comprehensive policy, strategy and action plan that takes into account the prevailing housing problems particularly in the relatively urbanized localities of the country is yet to be designed and implemented by the government. Such schemes should be developed based on complete and updated statistical data (disaggregated according to urban/rural areas) about the enjoyment of the right to adequate housing and emphasize the need to ensure affordable housing for low-income households.

39. *In view of the above concerns, it is recommended that the government of Ethiopia should:*

- a) Prioritize collection of complete and updated statistical data disaggregated by urban/rural areas about the real housing problem of the country;*
- b) Avail adequate legal and regulatory frameworks that that governing real estate developers, rental of housing units and the like;*
- c) Design and enforce detailed strategies and implementation plans governing re-development and relocation of urban dwellers to ensure enjoyment of security of tenure for citizens;*
- d) Expand basic services and infrastructure in cooperatives and housing projects and facilitate access to livelihoods; and,*
- e) Launch a comprehensive housing policy to increase affordable housing, regulate the private housing sector (rental houses) and intensify government investment in the housing sector.*

VI. Water and Sanitation

40. Ethiopia's reliance on limited resources as the main sources for water has proven to be problematic. Considering the population growth and rapid urbanization, the amount of water these sources provide annually are becoming more inadequate, resulting in a stark water crisis. Average per capita fresh water availability in Ethiopia particularly in urban areas is on a steady decline,⁸ and it is estimated that this will continue to decline further and there are wide disparities between different parts of the country. Many households suffer from clean water shortage and irregular water service.

41. Though overall access to improved sanitation has increased over the years, it is still slightly lower than average and wide regional disparities are also observed in this regard. A very small percentage of the population is connected to the sewerage system.⁹ Regular access to clean and quality water also remains very problematic. In addition, a great deal of the refined water produced by the different publicly owned water supply enterprises at times are found to be contaminated with harmful micro-organisms and is not suitable for drinking. Particularly the poor who cannot afford bottled water are most severely affected. Most diseases in the rural areas are found to be attributable to unsafe drinking water, inadequate sanitation, insufficient hygiene and an inefficient management of water resources. Diarrhea the disease that most commonly accompany water, sanitation and hygiene problems, are very common in these parts of the country. Though improving drinking water, sanitation, hygiene and water management could alleviate the bulk of disease burden in the rural parts of the country, measures in this regard seems to be in short supply.

⁸ Ethiopia ranked 121 out of 188 countries in Renewable internal freshwater resources per capita (cubic meters) - Country Ranking.

⁹ Sewer and drainage system coverage in the country is only 10pc in Addis Abeba and six percent at a national level; Addis Fortune Addis Ababa;

42. While water production remains state-owned, it is still poorly and inefficiently managed. In addition to that the state budget for water and sanitation services remains very low. Information regarding access of the poor and the vulnerable to safe drinking water and sanitation is not availed by the government so as to guide the design and implementation of policies and strategies aimed at addressing the challenges faced by these members of the society.

43. There is no specific legislation in the country that recognizes water and sanitation as human rights. What is more legislations that delineates the responsibilities of different agencies in relation to ensuring water quality, controlling pollution and ensuring safety of sanitation facilities as well as specific measures for ensuring affordable access to water and sanitation for the poor are not available.

44. Recommendations for government action to address the above gaps and concerns include:

- a) Initiating a comprehensive survey on access to safe drinking water and sanitation and develop tailor made strategies and action plans to address the gaps;*
- b) Adoption of a legislation recognizing and giving effect to the right to water and sanitation (this should clearly delineate the responsibilities of different agencies for testing water quality, controlling pollution and ensuring the safety of sanitation facilities);*
- c) Introducing action plan and implementation strategy for specific measures to ensure affordable access to water and sanitation for the poor and marginalize; and,*
- d) Designing immediate intervention action for regularity of clean and safe water in new relocations.*

VII. Right to Food

45. In 2017, 5.6 million people required food relief assistance and 303,000 children required treatment for severe acute malnutrition, mainly due to El Nino¹⁰. Despite some policy and budgetary measures noted, food insecurity and under-nutrition still remain among the main challenges of the country, and hinder development and economic growth. In 2015 the country ranked 174 out of 188 in the UNDP Human Development Report.

46. Relying on government data from 2017, though there is disparity between rural and urban localities; child malnutrition is a serious problem in the country and is very costly to the Ethiopian government. Overwhelming majority of the most vulnerable households are unable to meet their food needs.

47. Poorly managed and implemented state policies have exacerbated the food crisis in the country over the last decade. First, the government lifted subsidies on various commodities. In some parts

¹⁰ The Humanitarian Requirements Document.

of the country, state sponsored cooperatives and the private sector also monopolized trade on farm products, such as crops, in order to curb the prices of agricultural crops. This weakened peasants' returns from farming to a level that is insufficient for a decent life and gainful employment, which prompted massive numbers of small farmers to sell their land and migrate from rural areas.

48. The real impact of agrarian reform has been to turn vast tracts of agricultural land into property for development for investors. With the recent introduction of foreign companies to the agricultural sector chemical fertilizers and pesticides replaced organic means of agriculture and attempts to find water-saving, disease preventing, sustainable agriculture are being ignored and high emphasis is given to export of food products and earn foreign exchange for the country. Such policies have led to widespread deprivations of the right to food, mainly due to a lack of economic access.

49. The spike in inflation in the past three to five years has had a hugely negative impact in this regard, given Ethiopia's reliance on imported food such as wheat flour and edible oil. As a result the particular rise in prices for specific items such as breads and cereals is becoming unbearable for the majority of poor households. Urban areas remain more expensive for the majority of the residents, which is partly a reflection of the removal of subsidies in rural areas.

45. Although some of the statistics on the right to food are useful, they do not shed light on the root causes of neither the country's food crisis, nor the barriers to addressing it. The government has traditionally kept food prices down through subsidies on food items like flour and edible oil. Yet, recently there have already been bread shortages in several localities of the country; and many citizens are unable to access subsidized bread. A system of ration cards that allow households to buy set quotas of commodities at subsidized prices from specific outlets/shops/ has been introduced. However, there are concerns that the ration card system suffers from poor and limited targeting; as some of the households it covers are considered non-poor, while a considerable portion of vulnerable households are excluded due to a number of factors such as not having an identity card of a particular residential area. Moreover, quantities of rationed foodstuffs are insufficient for a large number of households and need to be supplemented.

50. Instead of increasing efficiency in the subsidy system which can lead to savings that could be invested in more targeted food security and nutrition interventions as well as job-creating initiatives in poorer areas; the removal of the food subsidies is causing a lasting impact upon national poverty as well as exacerbating the living conditions of poor households. A proper reevaluation of policies relevant subsidy reductions, especially food subsidies is desired. Their human rights impact should have been critically analyzed, especially on the most disadvantaged.

51. Supply side challenges as well as those pertaining to inefficient regulation of the market are making it difficult for the majority of both the rural and urban residents to enjoy their right to food as well as improve their standard of living. Food related expenditures are taking the lion's share of the household expenses of each and every family and making it difficult to ensure an adequate standard of living for their families.

Unless urgent measures are taken in this regard it would be quite difficult for citizens to become productive with meaningful contribution to the all rounded efforts to bring about the sustainable development of the country.

- 52. In order to ensure access to affordable food, it is recommended that the Government should:**
- a) Properly evaluate the human rights implications of food subsidy reductions and adopt a human rights based approach that caters for the poor and marginalized;***
 - b) Regulate escalating food price inflation through appropriate policies and strategies at different levels to ensure affordability of food items;***
 - c) Enhance food source diversification; and,***
 - d) Increase food production by enhancing small farmers' access to farm land, agricultural supplies and technology, as well as credit and finance schemes.***