

# Statement

## UPR Pre-session on the United States of America

Delivered by the National Right to Food Community of Practice  
28th August 2025, Geneva

Today, we recognize the millions of people in our country who have to choose between paying rent, accessing basic healthcare and affording healthy food with dignity.

We draw attention to current challenges with a hope to work together towards a future where all of our rights are fully realized.

I deliver this statement on behalf of the National Right to Food Community of Practice, a membership-based coalition of more than 200 advocates and organizations working to advance the right to food at local levels in 35 states across the United States.

We submitted a report to the Universal Periodic Review of the United States this year and in 2019.

This statement will focus on the Right to Food through the lens of two topics:

- Social and Economic Protections
- Climate and the Environment

### **Social and Economic Protections - Previous recommendations**

Previous UPR recommendations related to Social and Economic Protections have focused on:

- Addressing inequality between rich and poor in our country,
- Equitable access to effective and comprehensive health services, without discrimination,
- Addressing housing and sanitation problems, particularly for the most vulnerable, and
- Recognizing economic, social and cultural rights for all.

### **Social and Economic Protections - Update on situation**

During the pandemic, child tax credits and expanded unemployment insurance helped mitigate food insecurity that resulted from income losses and increased food prices. Government relief and other economic policies were so successful that the U.S. poverty rate dropped to a record low of 8%.

When these measures expired in 2022, the poverty rate rose to 12.4%.



We see that poverty is a policy choice in the United States.

We are concerned about a rollback and further erosion of our most effective anti-poverty programs:

- SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)
- School Meal Programs, and
- WIC (the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children).

Loss of funding for these programs will make it harder to meet the previous recommendations. Healthy foods will be more expensive and less accessible for low-income families, school children and pregnant and post-partum mothers. These are the largest cuts to social and economic protections in our history and mean even more people will be forced to choose between adequate food and paying for healthcare, rent and utilities.

### **Climate and the Environment - Previous recommendations**

Previous UPR recommendations related to Climate and the Environment have focused on:

- Rejoining the Paris Agreement on climate change, and
- Strengthening international cooperation to address environmental challenges and their effects on human rights in the United States and around the world.

### **Climate and the Environment - Update on situation**

We recognize and honor international cooperation and collaboration as essential to mitigating and addressing the effects of the climate crisis. The United States has an important role to play in this work, and a responsibility to care for the needs of our present and future generations.

Since the previous Universal Periodic Review, we have experienced a loss of commitment to international cooperation and collaboration related to the climate crisis, and the removal of many environmental safeguards domestically.

Corporate influence over policymaking remains a barrier to the inclusion of a diversity of voices in the co-creation of a future where everyone in our country and the planet enjoys a healthy environment, with access to clean air, water and a stable climate.

We believe it is important to:

- prioritize support for Indigenous communities' stewardship of land, forests, and waterways for food production;
- increase urban communities' development of local farms and food forests; and
- invest in farmers who use agroecological practices that enhance biodiversity and support healthier soils and cleaner water for future generations.



## Suggested Questions

We suggest the following overarching questions:

- What policies and practices can be adopted to end hunger by mitigating poverty and addressing crises in housing and homelessness?
- How are you planning to protect the rights of children, women and historically marginalized groups from cuts to food assistance and health coverage programs?
- What plans are in place to ensure that agricultural production does not contribute to increasingly severe floods, fires and storms in the United States and in other countries?

## Recommendations

We would like to highlight 5 recommendations that focus on the Right to Food as it intersects with other economic, social, cultural and environmental rights:

- Adopt national and state-level plans to end hunger, built on the principle of dignity, with participation from those most affected by poverty.
- Protect and increase public spending for food and nutrition assistance programs, and eliminate ineffective income eligibility guidelines.
- Support, subsidize and incentivize independent and small-scale food producers that implement sustainable, regenerative and agroecological practices.
- Protect the fishing, hunting, water and land rights of Indigenous peoples.
- Enact laws to reverse the effects of *Citizens United* and require increased transparency of corporate campaign donations and lobbying on food and agricultural systems.

## Additional information

We are willing to answer any questions you may have, and have brought additional information from our partners in the United States about economic, social, cultural and environmental rights.

Accompanying [slides available here](#).

