



EUROPEAN UNION  
Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office  
and other international organisations in Geneva

**United Nations Human Rights Council  
22<sup>nd</sup> session**

**Clustered interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right to food  
and the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right  
to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this  
context**

**4 March 2013**

**EU Intervention**

Mister President,

The European Union would like to thank the Special Rapporteur Mr. Olivier De Schutter for the presentation of his report on women's rights and the right to food.

The European Union shares the Special Rapporteur's view that States have the duty to ensure gender equality and promote the empowerment of women. This duty is of special importance for women (and girls) suffering from marginalization in an especially disadvantaged environment when it comes to the implementation of the right to food. We would be interested to learn more about best practices in tackling this challenge the Special Rapporteur might have identified during his research.

This said, we would like to take this opportunity to highlight the fact that despite the disadvantaged situation of many women, they always had and continue to contribute to food security, to the improvement of food production and distribution. This contribution might be even improved through the adoption of an adequate gender policy allowing women better access to the tools of production and necessary resources: land, water, seeds, just to mention a few.

The European Union would like to recall the "Voluntary Guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security" (FAO, endorsed in May 2012) that the Special Rapporteur refers to in his report on his mission to the FAO. These Guidelines establish "equity and justice" and "gender equality" as guiding principles of responsible tenure governance. In the view of the Special Rapporteur, where do we stand with regards to the implementation of these Guidelines?

Access to land is but one of several vital factors for the realization of the right to food. Access to other natural resources such as water, forests and fisheries is of equal importance. As an example, the Beijing Platform for Action calls for legislative and administrative reforms to ensure gender equality in the access to natural resources, including inheritance and ownership rights. We would like to ask the Special Rapporteur if he considers to elaborate further on the question of access to other natural resources in a future report?

On the issue of maternal and child malnutrition, the European Union would like to recall the "UN Renewed Efforts against Child Hunger and Malnutrition" (REACH) that both acknowledge the importance of maternal nutrition and highlight the need for increased gender-sensitive strategies and programming. We would like to ask the Special Rapporteur about the challenges of integrating a human rights perspective into existing strategies and programmes, be they bilateral or multilateral? Could he elaborate more on best practices in this regard?

The European Union wishes to thank the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing for her annual report dedicated to the issue of security of tenure. We see this report as a timely opportunity to deepen our understanding of the right to adequate housing and to further clarify its content.

As it is highlighted in the present report, one of the greatest obstacles to the full realization of the right to adequate housing is the recognition and protection of security of tenure. Any initiative related to housing, irrespective of context, has inevitably tenure security implications, putting especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged sectors of society at great risk of tenure insecurity.

The EU attaches importance to the valuable work the Special Rapporteur has undertaken so far to elaborate of the multidimensional and multifaceted concept of security of tenure and to address various operational and policy challenges pertaining to ensuring security of tenure.

The current report clearly illustrates the need for guidance on ways to address the variety of tenure security issues, and to strengthen security of tenure, particularly for those who most need it. This is why the European Union welcomes the Special Rapporteur's decision to devote her main attention to this highly pertinent issue of security of tenure during the remainder of her mandate.

The EU also takes note with appreciation the Special Rapporteur's reports on her recent field missions. These reports have contributed to raising awareness on, inter alia, necessary protection measures in relation to the fulfillment of the right to adequate housing, with particular emphasis on aspects of gender equality and protection of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable sectors of society.

The EU would be interested in hearing about identified practices, policies, and measures to learn from in order to promote recognition and protection of security of tenure.

Thank you Mister President.