

SHRC Statement Right to Food
Human Rights Council, Thirty-fourth session, 27 February-24 March 2017,
Agenda item 3

Mr President,

The Scottish Human Rights Commission welcomes the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. In particular the recommendation that gaps and inadequacies in existing legislative frameworks for protection against hazardous pesticides must be confronted on a human rights basis. In the UK, as there is uncertainty about the future application of European Union regulatory law in this area, we must look to strengthen the entire domestic human rights legal framework.

The Right to Food in Scotland has been seriously affected by a number of factors in recent years. For example, the impact of welfare reform by the UK Government has meant a reduction in the income of vulnerable groups.

Low wage rates have meant that over 60% of the total number of people living in poverty are in employment.

And increasing costs of food have meant an overall decline in living standards and an increase in the proportion of household income being spent on food.

The major food bank provider, the Trussell Trust, reported that they gave out 1.1 million 3-day food parcels in 2015/16, 400,000 of these for children across the UK. These figures are considered to underestimate the scale of the problem.

In the forthcoming UPR of the United Kingdom the Scottish Human Rights Commission will be highlighting these issues and the need and opportunity for strengthened enforceability of the right to food in domestic law, bringing greater policy coherence across the food system on access, adequacy and availability of food in Scotland.

The Scottish Human Rights Commission wants to see the Scottish Government go further to meet its obligations and advance its specific pledges to explore the incorporation of international standards in domestic law and enshrine the right to food within Scots Law.

SHRC further urges the Scottish Government to fulfil its commitment to advance this work in broad partnership with others in line with GC 12 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ensuring strong monitoring benchmarks and routes for access to justice.

Finally, the SHRC would like to highlight the indivisibility and interdependence of all our rights and therefore the need to advance a wider reaching dialogue about the incorporation and implementation of all economic, social and cultural rights.

We look forward to further progress in this area and the ongoing support of this Council and other UN mechanisms in doing so.

Thank you Mr President