



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
FOR HOME ECONOMICS

**POSITION STATEMENTS  
UN MILLENNIUM  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS  
2011**

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INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
FOR HOME ECONOMICS

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## PREFACE

*In September 2000, building upon a decade of major United Nations conferences and summits, world leaders came together at United Nations Headquarters in New York to adopt the **United Nations Millennium Declaration**. This provided the platform for the leaders to commit their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets - with a deadline of 2015 - that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals.*

The eight UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015 – form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and the entire world's leading development institutions. They have galvanised unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest.

The United Nations Millennium Campaign, started in 2002, motivates and inspires people from around the world to take action in support of the Millennium Development Goals.

As an UN International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) of longstanding, the International Federation for Home Economics is in a position to contribute internationally in a variety of ways to reach the UN MDGs. This could include but limited to:

- Advocate for groups and on specific issues of the UN MDGs.
- Raise awareness at all levels regarding the significant and resources of Home Economics knowledge to reduce poverty.
- Provide special expertise where it is needed from a Home Economics perspective.
- Conduct research and carry out projects to support the aims of the UN MDGs, and
- Cooperate with other NGOs and international organisations to accomplish the UN MDGs.

This brochure, with the IFHE Position Statements relating to the eight MDGs, demonstrates ways in which Home Economists and the IFHE as a world organisation of like-minded professionals can support the United Nations Millennium Campaign in reaching its aims!

On all levels in the society Home Economics knowledge and its related expertise are relevant and needed to effectively reach the UN MDGs.

So important are these goals to the IFHE that they have been integrated into the Strategic Activities for the organisation. It is therefore our fervent wish that Home Economists around the world would strengthen their efforts to contribute to meeting the UN MDGs and promote Home Economics education as a basic resource to end poverty and its associated maladies.

*Bonn, February 2011  
Geraldene B. HODELIN  
IFHE President (2008 - 2012)*

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## INTRODUCTION

The available IFHE Position Statements regarding the eight United Nations Development Goals (UN MDGs) are included in this brochure for reference and use by Home Economics professionals and individuals who have interests in global developmental issues that can be addressed by professionals at personal and organisation levels. The IFHE statements are meant to:

- Provides background information to each UN MDGs.
- Raises awareness of the causal relationship.
- Point out the need for action on the different levels.
- Refers to the capacity of Home Economics to reach the goals.
- Demonstrates the room for manoeuvre of Home Economics.
- Shows areas for action and
- Motivates Home Economists to take action.

There are two aspects of this document:

1. The brochure should be seen as a stimulus and resource for Home Economists to take action, to engage when ever possible and to communicate when necessary to promote and support the UN MDGs in all regions of the World.
2. The IFHE Position Statements demonstrate that Home Economics knowledge is significant and valuable in all fields of action and on all levels to reach the MDGs.

The Statements are complete only when each Home Economics professional is able to reflect on and integrate these and other progressive ideas into their everyday practice.

For more information and background please see the list of sources at the end of the brochure.



## POSITION PAPER ON ERADICATION OF POVERTY



### IFHE Position Statement on the UN Millennium Development Goal 1: “Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger”

#### Introduction

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) supports the United Nations Millennium Development Goal “**Eradicating Extreme Poverty and Hunger**” (MDG 1).

The goal is set to fight extreme poverty and hunger resulting from unemployment or below subsistence income. One organised response of IFHE is to adopt “Improving Quality of Life through Partnerships and Collaboration especially with United Nations” as one of the six main strategic objectives for the next four years of its administration.

The following Position Statement is intending to serve as the IFHE contribution to the discussions on the Millennium Development Goals, and especially as a reference to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Review Summit 2010.

In the year 2000, 189 countries signed the Millennium Declaration, which led to the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These eight goals are set to be achieved by the year 2015.

**Goal number 1, “Eradicating Extreme Poverty and Hunger”**, is comprised of three targets:

- The first target is to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.
- The second target is to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people.
- The third target is to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. Several indicators are used to measure the realisation of these targets.

#### The Many Dimensions of Income Poverty

Poverty has many faces. Inadequate income can lead to lack of food, shelter or other physical necessities. Indirectly, insufficient material resources also lead to other dimensions of poverty, like social exclusion or poor access to education, health, services or infrastructure.

Opportunities to act as a member of society and community may decrease. Problems caused by poverty put individuals, families and communities under great stress.

In a changing world new skills are needed to survive and to fulfil one’s basic needs. Urbanisation, for example, changes the patterns of food consumption, as abilities to produce one’s own food are narrow. Knowledge about acting as a wise consumer in the market economy is needed, even if the material resources available for use are very scarce.

In its hardest form poverty is so extreme that it threatens the very existence of people. This kind of **absolute poverty** is mainly associated with developing countries but is also visible among the homeless and desperate in the urban centres of the developed cities of the world.

According to World Bank statistics, progress has been made in reducing extreme poverty. The World Bank, which has set its reference line for income at \$1.25 per day (at 2005 prices), reports that the proportion of the developing world's population living in extreme economic poverty has fallen from 52 per cent in 1981 to 38 per cent in 2005.

### **Poverty in all Regions of the World**

Nonetheless, remarkable disparities exist between the regions of the world. Poverty rates have fallen in East and South Asia, but in sub-Saharan Africa the decline of poverty has been very slow. In East Asia the goal of halving extreme poverty between 1990 and 2015 has already been achieved whereas in sub-Saharan Africa, the proportion of people living on just over a dollar a day is unlikely to be cut in half by the year 2015. During the last few years, the global economic crisis has threatened to destabilise progress in eradication of poverty in many of the poorest regions of the world.

The risk of poverty exists in countries around the world. In developed countries the unequal distribution of wealth may lead to alarming levels of income poverty. When this happens social exclusion and other consequences are likely to follow. In the European Union (EU), for example, 16 per cent of the EU population (about 79 million people) are at risk of poverty. That means that their income falls below 60 per cent of the median income of their country.

The poverty lines differ significantly from country to country, of course, but at the same time the society in which one lives sets the living standards and requirements for its individuals. Only with adequate access to resources and opportunities can the participation in normal social and cultural life and the satisfaction of basic needs be possible. How the basic needs and resources are defined, depends on the circumstances such as climate, cultural and social patterns and vigour of the national economy.

When this kind of **relative income poverty** is considered, there is no one common level of income that would guarantee that one is not pushed to the edge of society. And however developed the re-distribution of wealth is, some groups of people remain, who may fall through the safety net and it is this group to which special attention should be paid.

They often include, but are not limited to, lone parents, people living in institutions, ethnic minorities and migrants or asylum seekers, dispossessed indigenous citizens, many of whom live in proximity to the socially inclusive affluent.

The statistics measuring household income may also hide the poverty within a family. In this case each partner in the family does not have access to the same amount of money; a situation might occur when women, children or other dependents in the family may quietly suffer from poverty and its consequences. The link between gender equality and poverty is in this case especially visible.

Attention should constantly be paid to the diverse problems that occur in many dimensions of poverty. Especially the situation of children needs to be addressed. Often this situation is exacerbated when the dependent is physically or emotionally challenged and lacks the capacity to advocate on his or her own behalf or for which there are cultural biases and taboos.

## **The Role of Home Economics in Eradication of Poverty and Hunger**

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) is an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) having consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC, FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF) and with the Council of Europe. IFHE influences individuals, families, communities and policy makers through research publications, pedagogy and advocacy. IFHE collaborates with allied groups and organisations in serving the needs of individuals and families and in meeting its core objectives.

The members of IFHE are drawn from academia, community based occupations and corporate consumer services as well as hospitality and service-based organisations. The Home Economists associated with IFHE focus on the fundamental needs and practical concerns of managing everyday life resources. IFHE is also concerned with the issues impacting individuals' and families' well-being at the societal and global levels in an ever changing and ever challenging environment. The ultimate goal of the Federation is the improvement of the quality of everyday life for individuals, families and households.

Poverty alleviation, gender equality and social justice concerns are a priority of Home Economics professionals. The eradication of poverty requires action on all levels. That means global and national policies and governance, but it also includes work on the levels of community, family and individuals.

Improving the quality of life of individuals, families and communities is the special focus of Home Economics. Working in a multi-disciplinary field of profession, Home Economists are aware of the many dimensions of poverty. In addition to fulfilling basic physical needs, attention also has to be paid to family life and the abilities to act as member of the community.

Home Economics education can improve knowledge of best possible practices, techniques and acting as a member in consumer society in the changing world. Home Economics education and best practice includes for example resource management of households, gender equality, sanitation and water use, income generation skills, sustainable household production as well as food production, nutrition skills and health.

By turning the knowledge into everyday life skills, individuals, families and communities in both, developed and developing countries, can make the best use of the scarce resources available and also add value to them in a sustainable manner. As shown through these few examples, Home Economics skills can effectively contribute to the reduction of poverty and hunger.

The Home Economics profession and Home Economics education are able to recognise the occurring problems and hear the voices from the grassroots level, as households are the arena of everyday living. As a reaction to the constantly changing world, new ideas, practices and research results in Home Economics can be developed, distributed globally and taken advantage of where needed.

The Household, as the special interest and context and concern of the Home Economics profession, is the place to put the newly developed knowledge into action in an effective way.

With their expertise of everyday life of individuals, families and communities, Home Economists can bring the perceptions about the requirements to reduce poverty and hunger further and act at the governance and policy making level.

## IFHE Commitments

The International Federation for Home Economics supports the United Nations initiatives through its individual and organisation members globally, and acting at local levels in the over 50 countries represented by its members. In its work on improving the quality of everyday life for individuals, families and communities IFHE is also committed to the fight against poverty.

IFHE with its core concerns for the improved quality of the everyday lives of people demands that governments and actors at all levels:

- Strengthen efforts to eradicate poverty in their countries.
- Enable all citizens to acquire basic education and participate in economic development that will lead to the improved quality of life for themselves.
- Continuously fight against corruption and mismanagement in the use of their resources and in meeting the needs of all its citizens.

IFHE is committed through its continuing professional activities:

- **To promote the eradication of poverty on all levels of society from the perspective of everyday life**
- **To understand poverty as a complex phenomenon**  
Poverty not only has physical, but also psychological and social meanings to individuals, families and communities. Faces of poverty vary and take different forms in different regions and countries around the world.
- **To expand Home Economics education and support this thrust to further meet the challenges of poverty in the changing world**  
Income poverty, efficient and sustainable use of available resources and appropriate action in the consumer society are special focus areas in Home Economics education.
- **To enhance professional development and collaboration for members**  
Home Economics as an academic discipline can produce new knowledge regarding eradication of poverty. By networking and collaboration of Home Economists this knowledge can be applied to practice where needed.
- **To influence and develop policies and public debate to promote eradication of poverty**  
IFHE as an organisation and framework of collaboration will affect policies on the global level. This also includes collaboration with other INGOs. IFHE's individual and organisational members, who are most aware of their local challenges, will act on local and national levels.
- **To support the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger through its work at FAO**  
The IFHE has had consultative status with the FAO since 1952.
- **To promote the recognition of Home Economics potentiality in the eradication of poverty**  
The Home Economics perspective should be taken into account as well as an arena of everyday life, through Home Economics research and Home Economics education.

## POSITION PAPER ON PRIMARY EDUCATION

### IFHE Position Statement on the UN Millennium Development Goal 2: “Achieve Universal Primary Education”



#### Introduction

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) supports the United Nations Millennium Development Goal “**Achieve Universal Primary Education**” (MDG 2).

In 2009, the IFHE adopted “Improving Quality of Life through Partnerships and Collaboration especially with the United Nations” as one of the six main strategic objectives for the next four years of its administration.

The following Position Statement serves as IFHE’s contribution to the discussions on Millennium Development Goal 2. MDG 2 was set to ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

#### Summary of the Theme Primary Education for All

*“Education is the foundation of all societies and globally competitive economies. It is the basis for reducing poverty and inequality, improving health, enabling the use of new technologies, and creating and spreading knowledge. In an increasingly complex, knowledge-dependent world, primary education, as the gateway to higher levels of education must be the first priority.”* (The World Bank Group Global Data Monitoring Information System)

Universal primary education involves not only entering school at an appropriate age, but also progressing through the system and completing a full cycle of education. MDG 2 aims to ensure that all children of the world will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

The indicators used to measure the progress are:

- Net enrolment ratio in primary education.
- Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary school.
- Achieving literacy for 15 - 24 year-old young women and men.

The IFHE is an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) with consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC, FAO, UNESCO, and UNICEF) and with the Council of Europe.

#### Current Situation

Net enrolment ratios for primary education are improving worldwide. East Asia, Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean regions are close to achieving universal enrolment. Further, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, with lower enrolment rates, have made significant progress in last few years.

In more than 60 developing countries, at least 90 per cent of primary school aged children were in school, according to UNICEF statistics from the years 2000 - 2006. Whilst net enrolment ratios measure school entry, it is suggested here that literacy rates among young people aged 15 to 24 are a better measure of educational outcomes.

It is encouraging that the global youth literacy rate has risen from 76 per cent in 1990 to 86 per cent in 2005 – 2008 as more children have entered school and stayed in school longer. Efforts to increase literacy rates need to be supported as it is a better indicator of educational outcomes than net enrolment rates alone.

Nevertheless, challenges still exist. High regional averages disguise the fact that some countries are lagging behind. In all regions, at least a few countries remain off track and unlikely to reach the target of education for all, by 2015.

More than 75 million children of primary school age remain out of school, mostly in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Further, the primary completion rates of South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are the lowest, just 62 and 80 per cent respectively. School enrolment alone is not enough to receive the full benefits of education: pupils must continue to attend classes and achieve literacy.

The countries that are most seriously off-track need to drastically accelerate progress, in order to avoid depriving several more generations of the benefits of education.

### **Inequalities of Development**

In developing countries, it is more often girls than boys who are left out of school. In many countries, educating girls is widely perceived as being of less value than educating boys. Whilst the gender gap in the out-of-school population has narrowed between 1999 and 2008, the share of girls in this group decreased from 57 per cent to 53 per cent globally. In some regions, however, the share is much larger. In Northern Africa, for example, 66 per cent of out-of-school children are girls. Children living in rural areas are also more likely to be out-of-school compared with children living in urban areas. The rural-urban gap is also slightly wider for girls than for boys.

Attention needs to be drawn to marginalised groups of children, who have equal rights but more limited opportunities to education. These include indigenous populations, cultural minorities, street children, disabled children or children with linguistic challenges.

When it comes to these groups, opportunities for standard schooling are often not enough so new approaches must be developed to accommodate them.

### **Societal Need to invest in Education**

There is a variety of reasons for children not receiving a primary school education, including social and cultural barriers; however, the biggest obstacle to education is poverty.

School fees, including indirect fees such as community contributions, textbook fees, compulsory uniforms and other charges, are a burden for poor families. In sub-Saharan Africa, school fees may consume nearly a quarter of a poor family's income. Experiences from several developing countries have shown that abolishing school fees is a very effective way of increasing school enrolment.

However abolishing school fees alone does not solve the problem. Societies need to invest in school systems. Countries with low completion rates need to train teachers, build classrooms and improve the quality of education.

Between 2010 and 2015, the number of new teachers needed in sub-Saharan Africa alone equals the current teaching force in the region. Lack of transportation and parental concern for the safety of their children are other examples of barriers that societies have to address. A holistic approach involves investment in the development of all levels, types and forms of education, in order to achieve universal primary education.

### **Home Economics Contribution to the UN MDG 2: “Achieve Universal Primary Education”**

IFHE - a global network of Home Economics experts - is an INGO which has consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC, FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF) and with the Council of Europe.

The members of the IFHE are drawn from education, academia, community-based and corporate consumer services, hospitality and service-based organisations. The professionals associated with the IFHE focus on the fundamental and practical issues related to meeting the basic needs of individuals and families in everyday life. They are also concerned with how these issues impact individuals and families and their well-being at the societal and global levels in an ever-changing and ever-challenging environment.

The IFHE on behalf of its members from all over the world supports the UN MDG 2 “Achieve Universal Primary Education”. From a diverse range of community and educational backgrounds, Home Economics professionals concentrate on providing the foundation for children to attend primary school. They do this by facilitating and professionalising the work of individuals and families living in rural and urban households. This is especially important in rural households where children are often required to participate in the housework or in domestic farming. Often parents are prevented from sending their older children to school because they need their help to contribute productively to the household by caring for other family members and by working.

By developing and applying the knowledge of basic Home Economics processes in the home and on domestic farms, more families, particularly those living in rural areas and who are more likely to be living in poverty, now have the opportunity to send their children to school.

Adequate food supply is critical in relation to the health status of children. Nutritional status has an important effect on children's ability to concentrate and learn.

The research, practice and active involvement of Home Economics professionals' in nutrition and health assists to further understanding regarding how best to improve health status in children. Application of this knowledge is instrumental in contributing to children's ability to attend school.

As indicated in the last UN MDG report, more girls than boys are out of school, as girls' education is often seen as less worthy than boys' education. Home Economics professionals recognise that women often have different competencies compared to men. These competencies are instrumental in sustaining a family's economic development and therefore improving their social status and domestic and farming productivity.

### **IFHE Statement**

The IFHE recognises the significance of the woman's role in families and the importance of strengthening the status of women in families in order to reach gender equality. Support of these changes is critical in improving a girl's chances of receiving a primary school education.

Research in various disciplines, conducted by Home Economics professionals, contributes to the development of new knowledge of processes and skills in ensuring the welfare and fair treatment of individuals and families. Across the world, these professionals integrate their research to develop Home Economics curricula in primary and secondary schools.

The basic knowledge and skills learnt in Home Economics at school are applied at home and enable all family members to develop these competencies. This improves the quality of life for families living in developed and developing countries.

### **IFHE Commitments**

**IFHE is committed through its continuing professional activities:**

- **Empower families for having the chance to send children, particularly girls, to school**  
IFHE strongly supports the efforts to educate urban and rural households in Home Economics skills to build the foundation for sending children to school.
- **Decrease poverty and hunger as a foundation for school attention**  
The IFHE continues to provide ongoing support to the "Right to Food" with its international work and its Programme Committee "Food Security & Nutrition & Health". Decreasing poverty and hunger improves the chances for children from poor regions to attend school and contributes to them learning more effectively.
- **FAO**  
**Improve the chances for girls to attend school**  
The IFHE supports the efforts in achieving gender equality while still respecting cultural and family traditions.
- **NGO Committee on the Family**  
Implement permanent Home Economics education in primary and secondary schools to improve quality of life. IFHE supports this effort with its Programme Committee "Home Economics Policies in Education and Training" as a platform of exchange between education experts from all over the world.

## POSITION PAPER ON GENDER EQUALITY

### IFHE Position Statement on the UN Millennium Development Goal 3: “Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women”



#### Introduction

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) supports the United Nations Millennium Development Goal “**Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women**” (MDG 3). The goal is set to eliminate gender disparity in education and other areas of society. One organised response of the IFHE is to adopt the objective of “Improving Quality of Life through Partnerships and Collaboration especially with United Nations” as one of the six main strategic objectives for the next four years of its administration.

The following Position Statement is intending to serve as the IFHE contribution to the discussions on the Millennium Development Goals, and especially as a reference to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Review Summit 2010.

**Goal number 3, “Promoting Gender Equality and Empowering Women”**, was set to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015. Several indicators are used to measure the realisation of the target. Even though the target is set on education especially, it will impact gender equality issues also within a wider perspective. Educated girls tend to become women with greater economic independence and ability to participate in multiple areas of society. Gender equality should be seen not as a separate goal only, but as a way to accelerate achievement of each of the eight goals.

#### Gender Equality in Education

Over 110 million of the world’s children are not in school, and two thirds of them are girls. Two thirds of the world’s 875 million illiterate adults are women. Progress has been made, as during the last two decades girls’ net enrolment ratio (NER) in primary school has improved: in the year 1991 there were 88 girls for every 100 boys in primary school, as in 2006 the number of girls was as high as 97 for every 100 boys. However, completion rates are lower, and when higher education is considered, the gender gap is wider.

There are also great disparities within the regions of the world. In many poor countries, as soon as families encounter financial difficulties, it is the girls who are taken out of school. The economic value of their work at home exceeds the perceived value of education. It is also considered more important that the boys stay in school than the girls.

But the advantages of education are great both on individual and national levels. When a country educates both its boys and its girls, economic productivity tends to rise, maternal and infant mortality rates usually fall, fertility rates decline, and the health and education prospects of the next generation improve.

Not only families', but also teachers' or administrative bodies' attitudes can reinforce stereotypes and contribute to discriminatory education for both girls and boys. This problem can be faced in developed countries, too, where the school enrolment ratio for both gender is high, but where some school subjects, like Home Economics, may be seen as "girls' subjects" or "boys' subjects" only.

### **Equality in Public and at Home**

Gender disparities limit women's opportunities in the labour market. In developing countries, men are considered to be the breadwinners of the family, as women's work often is unpaid work at home. Or if women are employed, they usually occupy low-paid, low-status jobs. Even when women and men do perform the same tasks for pay, women are often paid less and receive lower benefits from their work than men in developed as well as developing countries.

Women's large share of reproductive work, often known as the unpaid care economy, is undervalued as well as statistically invisible. When financial difficulties are met, both the burdens of paid work and unpaid work at home may fall on the shoulders of a woman. While it is estimated that women perform two-thirds of the world's work, they only earn one tenth of the income, and own less than one per cent of the world's property. Women throughout the world work longer hours for less rewards than men.

Gender equality in education or employment can not come true, if there is no gender equality at home. Attitudes, which are based on women's role as a housekeeper only, limit the rights of women, but also of the other members of the family. When families are built on partnership of women and men, who share the responsibility for family and housework, they also provide a good environment for equal decision-making and bringing up children.

Gender discrimination may take forms of violence or serious health problems. As many as one out of three women worldwide will be beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime. In sub-Saharan Africa, HIV/AIDS has become a threat for young women especially, as in the age group 15 to 24; two girls are infected for every boy. These serious outcomes of inequality remind one of the interconnectedness of several factors in the work for gender equality. Education, sovereign membership of community as well as equal and respectful partnership between women and men are all needed for better quality of life for all.

Strict gender roles and inequality may often be justified by "cultural traditions". However, speaking about gender equality is speaking about basic human rights. Equal possibilities and empowerment of women are an absolute necessity in order to reach Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development for the future. Traditions can change over time. Policy making is an efficient tool for shifting the status quo, but work for changing attitudes on the grassroots level is needed, too.

## **The Role of Home Economics in Promoting Gender Equality**

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) is an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) having consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC, FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF) and with the Council of Europe. The IFHE influences individuals, families, communities and policy makers through research publications, pedagogy and advocacy.

IFHE collaborates with allied groups and organisations in serving the needs of individuals and families and in meeting its core objectives. The members of the IFHE are drawn from academia, community based occupations and corporate consumer services as well as hospitality and service-based organisations. The ultimate goal of the Federation is the improvement of the quality of everyday life for individuals, families and households.

Poverty alleviation, gender equality and social justice concerns are a priority of Home Economics professionals.

Home Economists acknowledge the importance of equality in education, employment and business. Both women and men should have access to primary and higher education, and through the empowerment the knowledge gives, to act in employment or business. The skills learned and the equal opportunities acquired also improve the quality of life at home.

From the Home Economics perspective, family life at home should be built on equal partnership. On one hand that means a respectful attitude towards each other, so that no woman or man is repressed. On the other hand that means equal discussion and sharing of housework and other family life duties.

Promoting equality at home is a special area of expertise for Home Economists. As women are increasingly involved in employment, it is crucial to observe the sphere of home, to avoid a situation where new possibilities would mean double burden for women. Home Economics wants work-life balance to be a reality for both women and men.

From the Home Economics perspective a basic Home Economics education for both gender strengthens their skills for everyday life. It enables them to use their resources appropriately, to avoid financial problems, stressful time management and an unequal burden for women.

Behind all efforts towards gender equality lies the idea of empowerment. The discriminated should be given the tools, such as education, to gain self-confidence and the ability to speak and act for oneself. In the Home Economics context, empowerment also means making the unpaid work at home more meaningful to boys and men, who in many countries traditionally have not been involved in it. This sets challenges to Home Economists and Home Economics education.

## IFHE Commitments

IFHE is committed through its continuing professional activities:

- **To promote positive attitudes towards gender equality in education and participation in community, both in the fields of Home Economics and beyond it**
- **To empower women and men to act equally in community as well as at home**

Equal partnership improves the quality of life for individuals, but also the status of countries.
- **To promote the opportunity for paid work for both women and men**

Pre-conditions at home and in the economy should be in line with the needs of both gender and family life to enable work-life-balance for women and men.
- **To encourage Home Economists to have sensitivity to the gender questions**

Home Economics should be seen as an arena for everyday living, in which both men and women are equally involved. Depending on the circumstances, gender sensitivity sometimes means acting also gender-specifically, aiming the message to either women or men.
- **To enable female led households to overcome poverty and hunger through education and promotion of income generation opportunities for women**

The IFHE is aware of the different challenges for women, especially single mothers, and families in developed and developing countries.
- **To promote Home Economics as a curriculum area for both boys and girls**

Home Economics education facilitates students to discover and further develop their own resources and capabilities, by directing their professional decisions and actions or preparing them for life. These skills are important for both genders.
- **To enhance professional development and collaboration for members**

Home Economics as an academic discipline and profession can produce new knowledge or introduce “Best Practices” or projects regarding gender equality. By networking and collaboration of Home Economists this knowledge can be distributed.
- **To influence and develop policies and public debate to promote gender equality**

IFHE as an organisation and framework of collaboration will affect policies on global level. This also includes collaboration with other INGOs. IFHE’s individual and organisational members, who are most aware of their local challenges, will act on local and national levels.

## POSITION PAPER ON CHILD MORTALITY

### IFHE Position Statement on the UN Millennium Development Goal 4: “Reduce Child Mortality”



#### Introduction

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) supports the United Nations Millennium Development Goal “**Reduce Child Mortality**” (MDG 4). One organised response of IFHE is to adopt “Improving Quality of Life through Partnerships and Collaboration especially with United Nations” as one of the six main strategic objectives for the next four years of its administration.

The following Position Statement is intending to serve as the IFHE contribution to the discussions on the Millennium Development Goals.

The Millennium Development Goal 4 was set to reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.

#### Background

*“Nearly 9 million children under five die every year. Almost 90 per cent of all child deaths are attributable to just six conditions: neonatal causes, pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria, measles, and HIV/AIDS. During 1960 - 1990, child mortality in developing regions was halved to one child in 10 dying before age five. The aim is to further cut child mortality by two thirds by 2015.”* (World Health Organisation WHO)

The UN MDG 4 aims to reduce child mortality across the world.

The following indicators are considered:

- Under-five mortality rate.
- Infant mortality rate.
- Proportion of one-year-old children immunised against measles.

#### Achievements and Challenges

Substantial progress has been made in reducing child deaths. In 2008, 10,000 fewer children died each day than in 1990. Advances were made in Northern Africa, Eastern Asia, Western Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, but also in some of the world’s poorest countries, like Bangladesh, Bolivia and Eritrea.

Despite these achievements, many countries still have unacceptably high levels of child mortality and have made little or no progress in recent years. There are over 60 countries with high child mortality rates, defined as 40 or more deaths per 1,000 live births. It will be very hard for these countries to reach the Millennium Development Goal 4 target. The highest rates of child mortality continue to be found in sub-Saharan Africa, where in 2008, one in seven children died before their fifth birthday. Furthermore, high levels of fertility have resulted in an increase in the absolute number of children who have died. Also in Southern Asia under-five mortality remains very high.

### **Many children die from preventable diseases**

Most of the children who die under five years old die from causes that are readily preventable in rich countries. Acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea, measles and malaria are examples of these. Also the HIV/AIDS epidemic has driven up rates of infant and child deaths.

Improving health care systems is one of the most effective ways of reducing child mortality. Without adequate immunisation, children will continue to die of measles and other communicable diseases. UNICEF, for example, has organised massive immunisation campaigns. Local volunteers have been trained to administer vaccines and promote immunisation.

*“Globally, routine immunization against measles has continued to rise and protect millions of children against this often fatal disease. In 2008, coverage reached 81 per cent in the developing regions as a whole, up from 70 per cent in 2000. Such averages, however, mask significant inequalities in access to the vaccine. Data from 178 Demographic and Health Surveys suggest that access to measles vaccinations varies across different social and economic groups, with lower coverage for children in households that are poor or located in rural areas, or whose parents have lower levels of education. Higher birth order (that is, having many older siblings) is also associated with lower measles vaccine coverage.”* (UN MDG Report 2010)

Many lives can be saved through low-cost prevention and treatment measures, including antibiotics for acute respiratory infections, oral rehydration for diarrhoea, immunisation, and the use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets and appropriate drugs for malaria. Care for newborns and their mothers, infant and young child feeding, prevention and case management of diarrhoea, pneumonia and sepsis and prevention and care of HIV/AIDS are other key effective interventions, which can save millions of lives every year.

Attention has to be paid to living circumstances, too. Improvements in water supply, sanitation and physical access to health services support whole communities, but also individual people and especially children at risk of having fatal diseases. Sufficient nutrition supply also plays a significant role, since malnutrition increases the risk of death. Education is needed to promote disease prevention.

However, these programmes and improvements are dependent on funds. Recent successes may be short-lived if funding gaps are not bridged.

### **Home Economics Contribution to reach the UN MDG 4: “Reduce Child Mortality”**

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) - a global network of Home Economics experts - is an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO), having consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC, FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF) and with the Council of Europe.

The members of the IFHE are drawn from academia, community based occupations and corporate consumer services, hospitality and service-based organisations. The professionals associated with the IFHE focus on the fundamental needs and practical concerns of individuals and family in everyday life and their importance both at the individual and at community levels.

It is also concerned with the issues impacting individuals and families at the societal and global levels so that their well-being can be enhanced in an ever changing and ever challenging environment.

To strengthen the competences of daily life and leading a household is a Home Economics concern all over the world. But it is most important in developing countries because of the life-threatening situation caused by a lack of knowledge and skills in Home Economics and especially health education.

The education in sanitation and hygiene at home and in the surrounding of the family, especially of young children and babies, transfers skills and vital knowledge to families and women that facilitate them to improve and save their children's lives. This basic kind of education is essential to fight against communicable diseases and diseases which are affected by contamination.

The education about these kinds of diseases is a defining factor in reducing child mortality. From a Home Economics view the access to clean drinking water has a great impact on the nourishment of babies and young children, especially by preparing the meals, cleaning the baby or bathing young children. Additionally, of course, the education in the prevention of HIV/AIDS affects the maternal health and the child mortality ratios.

Home Economists recognise and highlight regularly the importance of sufficient and adequate food for everyone. An improvement of the nutrition situation – qualitative and quantitative – means a strengthening of the bodies of children and their whole family. Food status in itself has a meaningful impact on against diseases and in saving the children's lives.

**IFHE is committed through its continuing professional activities:**

- **IFHE calls for the improvement of the health care system**  
The health care system must be improved to get access to medical attention for every person. In addition, IFHE demands access to free vaccine for every baby, child, adolescent and adult person.
- **Education in communicable diseases**  
The knowledge about the prevention of communicable diseases must be brought into families and social communities to avoid the death of young children, their mothers and fathers.
- **Strengthen the efforts to reduce poverty**  
To reduce poverty and hunger have been front-ranking aims of the IFHE for a long time. Reducing poverty and hunger in itself improves the basic situation of families, households and especially children which influences the health situation.  
The IFHE has supported the “Right to Food” for a long time with its international work and its Programme Committee “Food Security & Nutrition & Health”.
- **Improve children's situation through the support of UNICEF**  
Since 1970 IFHE has consultative status with UNICEF and works on the NGO Committee on UNICEF, Working Group on Girls.

## POSITION PAPER ON MATERNAL HEALTH

### IFHE Position Statement on the UN Millennium Development Goal 5: “Improve Maternal Health”



#### Introduction

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) supports the United Nations Millennium Development Goal “**Improve Maternal Health**” (MDG 5). One organised response of the IFHE is to adopt “Improving Quality of Life through Partnerships and Collaboration especially with United Nations” as one of the six main strategic objectives for the next four years of its administration.

The following Position Statement is intending to serve as the IFHE contribution to the discussions on the Millennium Development Goals.

The Millennium Development Goal 5 was set to reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio, and to achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health.

#### Summary

*“More than half a million women die in pregnancy and childbirth every year - that's one death every minute. Of these deaths, 99 per cent are in developing countries. The lifetime risk of dying in pregnancy and childbirth in Africa is 1 in 22, while it is 1 in 120 in Asia and 1 in 7,300 in developed countries.”* (UNFPA/UN End Poverty 2015 Campaign)

The UN MDG 5 aims to reduce maternal mortality ratio across the world and to achieve universal access to reproductive health.

The following indicators are considered:

- Maternal mortality ratio.
- Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel.
- Contraceptive prevalence rate.
- Adolescent birth rate.
- Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit and preferably at least four visits).
- Unmet need for family planning.

#### Uneven Progress

More than 500,000 women in developing countries die every year in childbirth or during pregnancy. Additionally, every year at least 10 million pregnant and delivering women suffer injuries, infection, and disabilities. Most of this happens because of the lack of skilled routine and emergency care. Complications from pregnancy and childbirth are a leading cause of death and disability among women of reproductive age in developing countries.

Several countries with high maternal and newborn mortality have made progress in providing skilled care to women during pregnancy and childbirth. However, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and south-central Asia, the risk of dying during pregnancy or childbirth over a lifetime remains high. Less than half the women giving birth in these regions are attended by skilled health personnel. 99 per cent of maternal deaths occur in developing countries, with more than half occurring in Africa. There are 75 priority countries that account for 97 per cent of all maternal deaths worldwide.

Pregnancy in adolescence contributes to the cycle of maternal deaths and indicates limited access to reproductive health services. Adolescent fertility declined in almost all low- and middle-income countries between 1990 and 2000 but either remained stagnant or increased marginally between 2000 and 2005. Use of contraception is lowest among the poorest women and those with no education. Thus, poverty and lack of education also perpetuate high adolescent birth rates.

Antenatal care is a crucial service for healthy motherhood and childbirth by monitoring the well-being of both the woman and her baby. Progress has been made in all regions: for example in Northern Africa the share of women who met a skilled health worker at least once during pregnancy increased by 70 per cent. However, the recommended norm (by WHO and UNICEF) of four antenatal visits is still not accessible to many pregnant women worldwide. Disparities in the share of women receiving antenatal care by wealth are striking, particularly in Southern Asia, Northern Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Disparities also exist between women living in rural and urban areas, although the gap has narrowed.

The unmet need for family planning is unacceptably high in low- and middle-income countries. In sub-Saharan Africa, 24 per cent of women who want to delay or stop childbearing have no access to family planning. This figure varies between 10 – 15 per cent in the other world regions and further varies across population groups. Education and wealth typically guarantee better chances.

### **Education, Collaboration and Resources are needed**

Attention needs to be drawn, like with any of the UN MDGs, to the connections between maternal health and other Millennium Development Goal Challenges. Maternal health has a major effect on child mortality, whereas HIV/AIDS and other diseases, poverty and gender equality affect maternal health strongly. Equality is a crucial concept not only in its gender sense, but also when it comes to differences between regions and countries, income groups, education levels and rural and urban populations.

Most maternal deaths can be avoided. This requires skilled health personnel, efficient health care systems that are accessible to all, and resources for maintaining the health care systems. Education is also needed to convince communities and families about the importance of professional health care whether it comes to family planning, contraception, pregnancy or childbirth. Local bodies, UN Agencies and NGOs have to collaborate with governmental bodies to promote policy making for better access to maternal health services for all.

## **Home Economics and the IFHE contributions to “Improve Maternal Health”**

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) - a global network of Home Economics experts - is an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO), having consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC, FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF) and with the Council of Europe.

The members of the IFHE are drawn from academia, community based professions and corporate consumer services, hospitality and service-based organisations. The professionals associated with the IFHE focus on the fundamental needs and practical concerns of individuals and family in everyday life and their importance both at the individual and at community levels. It is also concerned with the issues impacting individuals and families at the societal and global levels so that their well-being can be enhanced in an ever changing and ever challenging environment.

The IFHE supports the MDG 5 by claiming that the

- Health situation mainly in the developing countries must be improved to enable health access to reach every pregnant and birth giving woman and their babies.
- The eradication of poverty must be pushed forward to enhance the external requirements to make pregnancy more safe and secure for all.
- The sanitation and hygiene knowledge, especially at home, must be improved to avoid death and contradictable diseases and contamination while pregnant and birth giving.
- Education for all, especially in family planning measures, must be reached to strengthen the engagement of the whole family and especially the men in supporting women’s health needs especially in the case of pregnancy and birth giving.

Improving the quality of life of individuals, families and communities is the special focus of Home Economics.

Working in a multi-disciplinary field of the profession, Home Economists do not only claim the access to health care but also transfer their knowledge in household sanitation and hygiene management to individuals and families by education. The first step to build a healthy environment for pregnant women is a clean home for the family and knowledge of clean water and healthy food. Home Economists in the developing countries contribute to the education of women by supporting gender equality and family planning education. In addition the IFHE and its members demand access to family planning aids for every woman to make her life more secure and self-determined.

More important than anywhere else in the world is the education in the different disciplines of Home Economics in the developing countries to contribute to the eradication of poverty. Home Economics regard the family and home are interdisciplinary issues from grassroots levels and support families and households in managing their every day lives in different and problematic situations. The decline of poverty would mean much better standard to the general health situation and because of that even to the health access for pregnant women.

Home Economics focus on the family as a social community in which every part is important for the functioning of the system. This is the reason why - from a Home Economics standpoint - men and husbands must be integrated as partners in maternal health. In developing countries men as head of the family often lead the family and need to recognising of the importance of maternal health and the access to health care for their woman is essential. Often it is only in cooperation with men it is only possible to improve maternal health and reduce maternal mortality.

It is even essential that the knowledge about family planning is transferred from the parents to their adolescent children. If the knowledge in the family is only fragmentary it is really important to facilitate this knowledge by education through a third person. Home Economists support the efforts in family planning education and recognise that not only adolescent pregnancies and mortality can be declined but also infections and child mortality can be avoided.

To reach the MDG 5 “Improve Maternal Health” supported by the IFHE the issues outlined to influence individuals, families, communities and policy makers through research publications, advocacy, education and practice.

## POSITION PAPER ON COMBAT DISEASES

### IFHE Position Statement on the UN Millennium Development Goal 6: “Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases”



#### Introduction

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) supports the United Nations Millennium Development Goal “**Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases**” (MDG 6). One organised response of IFHE is to adopt “Improving Quality of Life through Partnerships and Collaboration especially with United Nations” as one of the six main strategic objectives for the next four years of its administration.

The following Position Statement is intending to serve as IFHE contribution to the discussions on the Millennium Development Goals.

The Millennium Development Goal 6 was set to

- Halt by 2015 and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it.
- Halt by 2015 and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

The UN MDG 6 aims to halt and begin to reverse the incidence of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases.

#### The following Indicators are considered:

- HIV prevalence among population aged 15 - 24 years.
- Condom use for high risk sex.
- Proportion of population aged 15 - 24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS.
- Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10 - 14 years.
- Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs.
- Incidence and death rates associated with malaria.
- Proportion of children under five sleeping under insecticide-treated bed nets.
- Proportion of children under five with fever who are treated with appropriate anti-malarial drugs.
- Incidence, prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis.
- Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course.

## **HIV/AIDS**

*“At the end of 2008, 33.4 million people were living with HIV. That same year, some 2.7 million people became newly infected, and 2.0 million died of AIDS, including 280 000 children. Two thirds of HIV infections are in sub-Saharan Africa where there are an estimated 6.7 million people needing antiretroviral therapy.” (WHO)*

AIDS is the leading cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa and the fourth-largest killer worldwide. The disease poses an unprecedented public health, economic, and social challenge.

Although HIV remains the world’s leading infectious killer, and its prevalence continues to rise in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and other parts of Asia due to a high rate of new HIV infections, the spread of HIV appears to have stabilised in most regions. More people are surviving longer. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most heavily affected region, accounting for 72 per cent of all new HIV infections in 2008.

Due to the life-sustaining impact of antiretroviral therapy, the number of people living with the virus is still rising. In December 2008, approximately four million people in low- and middle-income countries were provided with antiretroviral therapy. However, there still were 5.5 million people in need who did not have access to the necessary medications. Additionally, for every two individuals who start treatment each year, five people are newly infected with HIV. The rate of new infections continues to outstrip the expansion of treatment. There is an urgent need to intensify both prevention and treatment measures.

A wide gap exists between knowledge of HIV and preventive action, sometimes due to cultural issues. Tacit social acceptance of violence against women and girls, for example in case of child marriages, compounds the HIV problem. Forced sexual intercourse increases the chances of contracting HIV.

## **Malaria**

*“Malaria kills nearly one million people a year – most of them children under five in Africa. In fact, on average a child in Africa dies every 30 seconds from a malaria infection caused by the bite of a mosquito.” (WHO)*

There are 300 - 500 million cases of malaria each year. Most cases occur in sub-Saharan Africa, and most deaths from malaria are among children younger than five years old. Half of the world’s population is at risk of malaria.

Major increases in funding and attention to malaria have accelerated the delivery of critical interventions and key commodities, like mosquito nets. All countries with trend data have shown major increases in insecticide-treated bed net use in the last decade. However, poverty and lack of knowledge still hinders many families from using bed nets.

Also more effective strategies have been adopted for use across the world, such as the use of effective combination therapies and diagnostics to better treatment. This development still needs to be supported.

## **Tuberculosis**

*“There were an estimated 9.4 million new cases of TB in 2008 and an estimated 1.8 million deaths (including 500 000 people with HIV), making this disease one of the world's biggest infectious killers.” (WHO)*

Tuberculosis kills about 1,8 million people a year, most of them 15 - 45 years old. It is the main cause of death from a single infectious agent among adults in developing countries, and remains the second leading killer after HIV. The disease is spreading rapidly because of the emergence of drug-resistant strains of tuberculosis, the spread of HIV/AIDS, which reduces resistance, and the growing number of refugees and displaced people.

The rate of new cases is highest in Africa, where tuberculosis attacks those infected with HIV. Tuberculosis prevalence is falling in most regions, except CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries in Asia and in sub-Saharan Africa. Although more and more tuberculosis patients are being cured, millions will remain ill because they lack access to good quality health care. In case of those living with HIV, lack of antiretroviral therapy makes tuberculosis fatal.

### **Education is needed**

Access to disease prevention and treatment needs to be available for everyone. That means providing inexpensive or free bed nets and medicines for those in need, as well as an accessible and professional health care system. Research is needed to develop more effective treatments, services and programmes. Funds are vital for these developments.

Education is the key to prevent people from becoming infected with HIV and other diseases. Information systems need to be improved in order to change behaviours, especially regarding HIV risk. Access to condoms and other prevention commodities is not enough, if people do not understand how they work and why they should be used. There are disparities in knowledge about HIV prevention among women and men, rich and poor and rural and urban populations. These disparities need to be observed when education programmes are planned.

### **Disease Mortality Affects all Development**

Epidemic diseases lead to human suffering, but also lost opportunities for development. Poverty, armed conflicts and environmental disasters contribute to the spread of diseases and are made worse by it. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, HIV epidemic is draining the supply of teachers and eroding the quality of education. Children orphaned by AIDS frequently suffer from stigma and discrimination and are at greater risk of poor health, education and protection than children who have lost parents for other reasons. They are also more likely to be malnourished, sick, or subject to child labour, abuse and neglect, or sexual exploitation – and these issues increase their risk of having HIV infection themselves. Effective prevention and treatment programs will not only save lives, but also reduce poverty, and help societies and economies develop.

## The Role of Home Economics

### Based on its four dimensions or areas of practice:

- In its academic discipline Home Economists educate new scholars, to conduct research and to create new knowledge and ways of thinking for professionals and for stakeholders in all societies with HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases to optimise prevention programmes, develop education material and sessions to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
- In the arena for everyday living Home Economists support households, families and communities to understand the background and connection between living conditions, behaviour, infections and epidemic diseases.
- Home Economists in the *curriculum area* facilitate students to discover and further develop their own resources and capabilities to support the combat of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases to use in their resources and capabilities in their personal life, by directing their professional decisions and actions to support all measures to avoid infections and diseases.
- In the *societal arena* Home Economists influence and develop policies to advocate for individuals, families and communities to reduce poverty, to intensify both prevention and treatment measures, to influence cultural knowledge to combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases.

## IFHE Commitments

### IFHE is committed through its continuing professional activities:

- **IFHE calls for the improvement of the health care system**  
The health care system must be improved to get access to medical attention for every person. In addition, IFHE demands for the access to free vaccine for every baby, child, adolescent and adult person and bed nets for children.
- **IFHE supports education in communicable diseases**  
The knowledge about the prevention of communicable diseases must be taught to families and social communities to avoid death of young children, their mothers and fathers.
- **IFHE demands the strengthening of the efforts to reduce poverty**  
To reduce poverty and hunger are front-ranking aims of the IFHE for a long time. Reducing poverty and hunger in itself improves the basic situation of family and households which influences the health situation. The IFHE has supported the “Right to Food” for a long time with its international work and its Programme Committee “Food Security & Nutrition & Health”.

## POSITION PAPER ON EDUCATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY / POSITION PAPER ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



### IFHE Position Statement on the UN Millennium Development Goal 7: “Ensure Environmental Sustainability” on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

#### Introduction

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) supports **the United Nations Millennium Development Goal “Ensure Environmental Sustainability”**, and the **United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 - 2014)**. One organised response of IFHE is to adopt “Improving Quality of Life through Partnerships and Collaboration especially with United Nations” as one of the six main strategic objectives for the next four years of its administration.

The following Position Statement is intended to serve as IFHE contribution to the discussions on the Millennium Development Goals, especially as a reference to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Review Summit 2010, and to the discussions on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

**The Millennium Development Goal 7** was set to reach four targets:

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources.
- Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss.
- Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.
- Achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020.

#### Education for Sustainable Development

For which the special Decade was established, addresses all three pillars of sustainable development – environment, society and economy. Its aim is to *“help people to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge to make informed decisions for the benefit of themselves and others, now and in the future, and to act upon these decisions.”* (UNESCO - Education for Sustainable Development)

Elements of sustainable development should be seen as an integrated whole, where one affects the others. Long-term economic or social development is not possible on a depleted planet. That is why environmental education lies at the core of education for sustainable development. Environmental sustainability is one of the keys to achieving overall sustainable development and achieves the eight UN Millennium Goals.

## Environmental Sustainability

Sustainable development is seeking to meet the needs of the present without compromising those of future generations.

Environmental perspectives on sustainable development cover several themes including water, climate change, biodiversity and disaster prevention. Excessive use of natural resources has caused alarming changes in our world in recent decades. To promote economic growth and increasing consumption patterns, high-income countries have extensively made use of the natural resources around the globe. This changes the local environment, but also contributes to global climate change. Lately this development has shifted to take place in developing regions, too, but high-income economies still remain the largest emitters of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).

Unfortunately, exploitation of natural resources often harms those who are most vulnerable and depend on natural resources for their livelihood. Poverty and economic insecurity can also encourage practices that are devastating for nature. As urbanisation and consumption habits of the developed countries increasingly become common in developing countries, the burden for the environment will be ever heavier.

Environmental sustainability is a question of future, but also of the present everyday life. In year 2006, around 2.5 billion people did not have access to improved sanitation and 884 million people lacked access to a reliable source of water that was reasonably protected from contamination. Inadequate sewerage spreads infections such as schistosomiasis, trachoma, viral hepatitis and cholera. Not only rural areas suffer from these problems, but also the rapidly growing slums around cities.

Rich and poor countries alike have to improve the sustainability of their resource use. Good policies and environmentally sustainable ways for economic growth need to be sought, and the technical and scientific knowledge needs to be put into action globally. However, one of the most powerful tools for promoting sustainable development and changing attitudes or behaviour is **education**. Education for sustainability can reach people as producers or consumers and as citizens.

## The Role of Home Economics

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) is an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) having consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC, FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF) and with the Council of Europe.

IFHE influences individuals, families, communities and policy makers through research publications, pedagogy and advocacy. IFHE collaborates with allied groups and organisations in serving the needs of individuals and families and in meeting its core objectives. The members of IFHE are drawn from academia, community based occupations and corporate consumer services as well as hospitality and service-based organisations. The ultimate goal of the Federation is the improvement of the quality of everyday life through education in resource management and sustainable consumption.

Home Economics is a field of study, a curriculum area and a profession, situated in the human sciences. It draws from a range of disciplines to achieve optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities.

This coalescing of disciplinary knowledge is essential because the phenomena and challenges of everyday life are not typically one-dimensional.

Holistic and integrated perspectives are essential aspects for education for sustainable development. Within the subject of Home Economics, environmentally sustainable action can be brought to the everyday life context, where it interrelates with the economic and societal dimensions of sustainability.

Home Economics as a curriculum area brings together theory and practice, academic knowledge and everyday life skills. It puts the knowledge into its everyday life environment and encourages students to think creatively. The contents of Home Economics education may vary depending on the local culture and circumstances, but in the background lies the idea of educating people to think globally. The same characteristics describe the education for sustainable development. It is based on the premise of “learning by doing” and should be applied in the context of each cultural or societal group.

Home Economics focuses on the arena for *everyday living* in households as well as families and institutional households. Home Economics education enables them to optimise their resource management in the sense of sustainable production and consumption which aims to develop human growth potential and human necessities or basic needs to be met.

Family households and institutional households are the core units of the economic unit and all their decisions and behavior have impact on the environment, the economic, social and ecological. To educate, enable and motivate families for a sustainable lifestyle will have a big impact on **Environmental Sustainability**.

In poor developing countries Home Economists may educate people about the need for basic sanitation, whereas in high-income countries the education for environmentally sustainable consumption is needed. In both cases the education is driven by shared values and efforts to achieve optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities.

UNESCO, the UN agency leading the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, has defined the four major thrusts of Education for Sustainable Development as follows:

- Improving access to quality basic education.
- Reorienting existing education programmes.
- Developing public understanding and awareness.
- Provide training.

Home Economists, as education professionals, are able to contribute to all four areas mentioned above. Home Economics as a curriculum area gives concrete frames and context to education for sustainable development. This combination of Home Economics and sustainability perspective is valuable as well as in school context as in adult training and other education programmes.

## IFHE Commitments

IFHE is committed through its continuing professional activities:

- **To recognise environmental sustainability as a powerful key to achieve overall sustainable development and the eight UN Millennium Goals**
- **To promote Home Economics curriculum area as a context for Education for Sustainable Development**  
This includes, adaption to the classification by UNESCO, promoting quality basic education, reorienting existing education programmes, developing public understanding and awareness of sustainable development, and providing training.
- **To promote sustainable lifestyles for families**  
IFHE will strengthen, in Home Economics education, the focus on sustainable resource management in households. This includes promoting best practices in all household processes, such as use of water. It also includes promoting sustainable consumption patterns.
- **To conduct international projects to develop effective strategies for Education for Sustainable Development**
- **To increase acknowledgement of Home Economics professionals as experts of sustainable development**  
The IFHE will enhance its relationships with UN agencies and other organisations or institutions. This will increase the recognition of Home Economics professionals but also bring new influences to develop Home Economics profession.
- **To enhance professional development and collaboration for members**  
Home Economics as an academic discipline and profession can produce new knowledge or introduce “Best Practices” or projects regarding education for sustainable development. By networking and collaboration of Home Economists this knowledge can be distributed.

## POSITION PAPER ON A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT



### IFHE Position Statement on the UN Millennium Development Goal 8: “A Global Partnership for Development”

### Background material for IFHE Position Paper on MDG 8: A Global Partnership for Development

#### Introduction

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) supports the United Nations Millennium Development Goal “**A Global Partnership for Development**” (MDG 8). One organised response of IFHE is to adopt “Improving Quality of Life through Partnerships and Collaboration especially with United Nations” as one of the six main strategic objectives for the next four years of its administration.

The following Position Statement is intending to serve as IFHE contribution to the discussions on the Millennium Development Goals.

The Millennium Development Goal 8 was set to

- Address the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked countries and small Island developing states.
- Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system.
- Deal comprehensively with developing countries’ debt.
- In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.
- In cooperation with the private sector, make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.

*“The Millennium Goals represent a global partnership for development. The deal makes clear that it is the primary responsibility of poor countries to work towards achieving the first seven Goals. They must do their part to ensure greater accountability to citizens and efficient use of resources. But for poor countries to achieve the first seven Goals, it is absolutely critical that rich countries deliver on their end of the bargain with more and more effective aid, more sustainable debt relief and fairer trade rules, well in advance of 2015.” (UN End Poverty 2015 Campaign)*

The UN MDG 8 aims to strengthen the realisation of other seven MDGs by developing global partnerships for development.

The following indicators are considered:

- Net ODA (Official Development Assistance), total and to the least developed countries, as percentage of OECD/DAC donors' gross national income.
- Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation).
- Proportion of bilateral official development assistance of OECD/DAC donors that is untied.
- ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their gross national incomes.
- ODA received in small island developing states as a proportion of their gross national incomes.
- Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and least developed countries, admitted free of duty.
- Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries.
- Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as a percentage of their gross domestic product.
- Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity.
- Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative).
- Debt relief committed under HIPC and MDRI Initiatives.
- Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services.
- Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis.
- Telephone lines per 100 population.
- Cellular subscribers per 100 population.
- Internet users per 100 population.

*“Goal 8 calls for an open, rule-based trading and financial system, more generous aid to countries committed to poverty reduction, and relief for the debt problems of developing countries. It draws attention to the problems of the least developed countries and of landlocked countries and small island developing states, which have greater difficulty competing in the global economy. It also calls for cooperation with the private sector to address youth unemployment, ensure access to affordable, essential drugs, and make available the benefits of new information and communication technologies.*”

*What will it take to achieve the Millennium Development Goals? A lot. Economies need to grow to provide jobs and incomes for poor people. Health and education systems must deliver services to everyone: men and women, rich and poor. Infrastructure has to work and be accessible to all. Policies need to empower people to participate in the development process. While success depends on the actions of developing countries, which must direct their own development, there is also much that rich countries must do to help. That is what Goal 8 is for – it complements the first seven. Official development assistance to developing countries reached \$105,1 billion in 2007.*

*Though much of the 1990s Official development assistance (ODA) levels fell. If all 2005 commitments to increase aid are met, ODA will reach nearly \$130 billion by 2010. New commitments will meet only a fraction of the need.*

*Debt service measures the relative burden on developing countries of their external debt. In many countries, export earnings, by which debtor countries acquire the currencies to pay their creditors, have been rising, while debt service has grown more slowly, reducing their debt burdens.” (World Bank MDG Atlas)*

### Home Economics contribution to MDG 8

The IFHE Position Statement describes Home Economics

- As an **academic discipline** to educate new scholars, to conduct research and to create new knowledge and ways of thinking for professionals and for society. The academic area of Home Economics is also based on partnership for example partnership among students, between lecturers and students and aims for development of human potential and new knowledge. Co-operation between researchers in developing and developed countries conduct scientific projects and are working together on specific questions and strategies to improve quality of life of families.
- As an arena for **everyday living** in households, families and communities for developing human growth potential and human necessities or basic needs to be met.  
Everyday life in families means partnership of family members between young and old, girls and boys, men and women, handicapped and healthy persons. Family life aims for the development of each member of the family. Furthermore Family life includes an efficient use of resources, which is also one key aspect of Home Economics.
- As a **curriculum area** that facilitates students to discover and further develop their own resources and capabilities to be used in their personal life, by directing their professional life, by directing their professional decisions and actions and preparing them for life. In the curriculum area partnership and development are important aspects too. Partnership is needed to be able to manage a classroom with many pupils or a school with different types of teaching methods. Partnership in training Home Economics courses through different types of projects on local, national and international level with the focus on improving quality of life and supporting families and people who have a lack of resources or suffer from disease.
- As a **societal arena to influence and develop policy** to advocate for individuals, families and communities to achieve empowerment and well-being, to utilise transformative practices, and to facilitate sustainable futures. Especially in the societal arena partnership is the basis for ability to act to enable and promote development and achieve well-being.

Partnership is a key element of Home Economics and development of human resources is a key aim of Home Economics.

Based on the insight that Home Economics by nature is based on partnership Home Economics is predestined and possesses the potential to support the MDG 8.

With the professional experiences of partnership and promoting development, Home Economics experts are qualified for international collaboration and co-operation for example: They are able

- To work in and support projects related to health and education.
- To establish and deliver health and education services to everyone: men and women, rich and poor.
- To use new information and communication technologies especially for women and girls in Home Economics lessons and courses.

### **IFHE Commitments**

Since its foundation in 1908 the International Federation for Home Economics supports and promotes

- International and transnational partnership.
- International and transnational exchange of knowledge and experiences.
- International and transnational projects to eradicate poverty and improve food security.
- International and transnational research to all kinds of Home Economics related aspects.

To support the UN MDG 8 IFHE will strengthen

- Its international network and exchange programme.
- Its project activities on international level.

## POSITION PAPER FOOD SECURITY 2009

### World Summit on Food Security FAO Rome, 16 – 18 November 2009



#### Introduction

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) is aware that the main objective of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is to guarantee that all people have access at all times to the food needed to lead healthy and active lives. IFHE supports the twin-track approach of FAO, World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and their development partners which aim to achieve and sustain global food security as soon as possible.

The International Federation for Home Economics is an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) having consultative relationship with ECOSOC of the United Nations which works in close co-operation with the UN Specialised Agencies, FAO, WHO, UNESCO and UNICEF, as well with the Council of Europe.

The members of the IFHE are drawn from academia, community based occupations and corporate consumer services, hospitality and service-based organisations. The professionals associated with the IFHE focus on the fundamental needs and practical concerns of individuals and family in everyday life and their importance both at the individual and at community levels. It is also concerned with the issues impacting individuals and families at the societal and global levels so that their well-being can be enhanced in an ever changing and ever challenging environment.

The IFHE influences individuals, families, communities and policy makers through research publications, pedagogy and advocacy. IFHE collaborates with allied groups and organisations in serving the needs of individuals and families in meeting its core objectives.

With its official Statement to the World Food Summit in 1996 IFHE already underlined that Home Economists have an understanding of the interdependence of individuals within households, communities and the larger socio-economic environment.

They therefore recognise the many issues which cause food insecurity resulting from the changes in social, political and economic structures and especially from climate change and the severe economic crisis.

The IFHE is concerned about the recent developments FAO stated: "World hunger is increasing and global food security is facing the greatest challenge in modern history."

IFHE supports the notion that the present situation has come about because, instead of tackling the structural factors of hunger, in recent decades the world has neglected agriculture in development policies, programmes, investments, research, training, extension and human resources capacity building. The time has come to act responsibly and address the root and multifaceted causes of food insecurity by adopting lasting political, economic, financial and technical solutions so that all people in the world can enjoy the "Right to Food", which is the most fundamental of all human rights.

**IFHE recognises that**

- Food security and food safety should be public policy priorities; millions of people die or fall ill every year as a result of malnutrition or eating unsafe food. Serious outbreaks of foodborne disease have been documented on every continent in the past decade, and in many countries rates of illnesses are increasing significantly.
- Gender equality in the distribution of economic and financial resources has positive multiplier effects for a range of key development goals, including poverty reduction and the welfare of children. The manner in which countries respond to the recession can have disproportionate impacts on women and girls, possibly reversing gains made, particularly through cuts in public spending on health and education and through inequitably designed safety nets.
- Unequal access to resources limits women's capacity to ensure agricultural productivity, security of livelihoods and household food and nutrition security is increasingly linked to poverty, migration, urbanisation and increased risk of violence. Population growth, spread of HIV/AIDS, climate change, conflicts and disasters increasingly constrain women, although the spread of markets and urbanisation have created new opportunities for women's access to productive resources, housing and entrepreneurial activities. Attention to the resource challenges women face in agriculture is essential for addressing the food and energy crises and climate change in both the short and long term.
- A focus on poor women is central to reducing poverty. Investing in the health, education, safety, and economic well-being of adolescents, especially young girls, must also be a priority.

**World Food Security**

The impact of the current World Food Security Crises is reflected in the noticeably reduced availability, high prices of basic foods around the world and especially lack of financial resources of families and countries in the undeveloped countries as well the industrialised countries as financial donors in the global Community. The reasons are many and varied and the result of developmental activities and trends globally. One reason is noted to be associated with the demands of a few "high-population" lesser developed countries (LDC) with increasing demands on world food supply. This increase is caused by the improved per capita income, change in dietary habits and population growth in those countries and their ability to trade more aggressively with non food commodities for their food needs on the world market. It appears that there has not been sufficient adjustment in the world food production volumes to meeting this type of demand.

It is further reported by international experts that based on the economic crisis there is a serious reduction in Food Aid from developed countries despite the increasing need for food in light of the Millennium Development Goal, "to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger", and the pervasiveness of civil and cross border conflicts which create massive dislocation of people in Africa and the Middle East.

International trade policies that do not support local subsidies for poor rural farmers in developing countries are also identified as a major contributing factor impacting the most vulnerable groups in the LDC including children, women, rural people and urban poor. Policies that ensure that food security as a priority on national agendas especially in the LDC, and that promote equity fairness in world trade and balance of payments must be part of the solution to this crisis.

### **Consequences of the Economic Crisis**

The current economic crisis is historically unprecedented, with several factors converging to make it particularly damaging to people at risk of food insecurity. First, it overlaps with a food crisis that in 2006 – 2008 pushed the prices of basic staples beyond the reach of millions of poor people. And, although they have retreated from their mid-2008 highs, international food commodity prices remain high by recent historical standards and volatile. Also, domestic prices have been slower to fall. At the end of 2008, domestic staple food prices remained, on average, 17 per cent higher in real terms than two years earlier. The price increases had forced many poor families to sell assets or sacrifice health care, education or food just to stay afloat. With their resources stretched to breaking point, those households will find it difficult to ride out the economic storm.

### **Challenges to Climate Change**

Climatic changes impacted by environmental conditions exacerbated by technological thrusts, environmental degradation continue to impact food production, world prices and distribution. Compounded by growing populations and the adaptation of environmentally unfriendly developmental activities and consumption choices, many developed countries continue to harvest the bulk and richer portions of the world's food resources. Denuded by long histories of poor environmental conditions for healthy agriculture and the absence of appropriate technology to facilitate the sustainability self sufficiency in basic food supply, LDC in vulnerable parts of the world are more acutely affected by the current world food crises. Between 2000 and 2004 around 262 million people were affected by climate disasters. Of these 98 per cent lived in developing countries.

### **Role of FAO**

The IFHE encourages the United Nations through its related groups like the FAO to continue its role as clearinghouse for technical, data sharing, multilateral discussions that seek to identify solutions for the concerns and challenges impacting food security and treat this crises with urgency at all levels.

IFHE supports the declaration of the World Food Summit on Food Security entitled **Secretariat contribution to defining the objectives and possible decisions of the World Summit on Food Security on 16, 17 and 18 November 2009.**

IFHE encourages the FAO to promote immediate actions and policies that will remove the risk of starvation from individuals, families and communities by providing the guidelines for all countries to make both National Food Security and Household Food and Nutrition Security a priority on development agendas.

IFHE encourages the FAO to prompt developed countries to increase Food Aid to LDC that are most impacted by the crises especially where families and children are dispossessed by drought, conflict, natural disasters and high balance of payment in response to national debts.

IFHE encourages the FAO to seek to declare that international trade policies be relaxed to support poor rural farmers in LDC in respect of the means for production, fertilisers, seeds, technology, roads and water for producing basic and nutritious food crops to meet the needs of local populations.

### **IFHE Commitments**

Through the different structures of the profession, Home Economics can ably help women to identify their needs, assess their resources and manage projects in order to provide solutions to the daily problems of food insecurity, thus benefits families, households communities and nations.

**IFHE is particularly concerned** with providing equal opportunities for all family members. The teaching of Home Economics provides both boys and girls and men and women with the ability to identify their individual and collective needs. This encourages them to face the complex task associated with family care, such as provision of food, through the sharing of responsibilities.

IFHE underlines that Home Economics education as basic education for consumers always focuses on sustainable resource management to strengthen sustainable development.

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) supports the United Nations initiatives through its individual and organisation members globally, and acting at local levels in the over 50 countries represented by its members, and in collaboration with other non-governmental organisations and civil societies is committed to:

- Eradicating hunger and extreme poverty actively participating achieving the declaration of the World Summit on Food Security.
- Pursuing educational activities through community based projects, academic research and curriculum instruction focusing on appropriate actions to mitigate the impact of world food markets on the poor.
- Advancing the idea that poor farmers around the world can be facilitated to access markets and encourage their improved productivity to improve personal income and food circulation through the adoption of trade policies that are sympathetic to their needs and that this is part of the solution to the growing food crises.
- Educating and the re-educating of the media, community based groups and NGOs regarding:
  - the nutritional quality of traditional and emerging foods;
  - the multiple issues and factors impacting the production, availability and access to adequate food supply and the culture related solutions that will meet the needs for improved and sustained quality of life for individuals, families in communities in various cultural settings around the world;
  - food management principles that are appropriate for households and families.

- Promoting healthy food choices and create ways of preparing and serving local foods that eliminate hunger and nutritional deficiency illnesses especially women, children and the aged.
- Promoting greater consumer awareness among citizens, entrepreneurs and policymakers for seeking local solutions to soaring food prices that are pulling many families into poverty.
- Collaborating with other NGOs in advocating for the increased financial support for the most vulnerable citizens of the world inclusive of women, children, the aged, rural and urban poor, through national, world trade and transnational aid policies.
- Continuously monitor the global developments in respect of the *Eradication of Hunger* and encourage groups within the IFHE to systematically share project results and best practices at meetings and conferences.

November 2009

*Dr. Gertraud PICHLER*

*IFHE President of Honour*

*IFHE Representative at UN/FAO*

*On Behalf of the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE)*

## POSITION STATEMENT FOOD SECURITY 2008

**World Summit on Food Security  
FAO Rome, 3 – 5 June 2008**



### **Position Statement on World Food Security and the Challenges of Climate Change and Bio-energy**

#### **Introduction**

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) is aware that the main objective of the FAO is to guarantee that all people have access at all times to the food needed to lead healthy and active lives. IFHE is also cognisant that among other activities, FAO support national and trans-national activities in areas of household and food security, food and nutritional education, food and nutritional surveillance, standardisation and food control, and about food composition.

The International Federation for Home Economics is an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) having consultative relationship with ECOSOC of the United Nations which works in close co-operation with the UN Specialized Agencies, FAO, WHO, UNESCO and UNICEF, as well with the Council of Europe.

The members of the IFHE are drawn from academia, community based occupations and corporate consumer services, hospitality and service-based organisations. The professionals associated with the IFHE focus on the fundamental needs and practical concerns of individuals and family in everyday life and their importance both at the individual and at community levels. It is also concerned with the issues impacting individuals and families at the societal and global levels so that their well-being can be enhanced in an ever changing and ever challenging environment.

The IFHE influences individuals, families, communities and policy makers through research publications, pedagogy and advocacy. IFHE collaborates with allied groups and organisations in serving the needs of individuals and families in meeting its core objectives.

The IFHE is concerned about the recent developments in the World food crises resulting in civil unrest in several countries, the escalating price of basic food items which threaten Food Security in poor countries and impacting vulnerable groups like women, children, rural and urban poor. The issues that impact this rapidly increasing cost of basic foods are many and each multidimensional.

In some parts of the world, the crisis is reported to be caused by poor distribution of food rather than inadequate production. Yet in most other parts issues revolve around climate changes and the resulting impact on agriculture and land usage that cause the decrease in food production and the loss of livelihood for poor rural farmers. The phenomenon is also impacted by bio-energy activities and the diversion of agricultural resources into the production of alternate energy sources for fuel, electricity and transportation.

IFHE supports the notion that the crises is sufficiently threatening globally that a High-Level Conference that focus on World Food Security and the Challenges of Climate Change and Bio-energy of the FAO is timely and looks forward to the outcome of these deliberations.

### **World Food Security**

The impact of the current World Food Security Crises is reflected in the noticeably reduced availability and the increasing high prices of basic foods around the world. The reasons are many and varied and the result of developmental activities and trends globally. One reason is noted to be associated with the demands of a few “high-population” lesser developed countries (LDC) with increasing demands on world food supply. This increase is caused by the improved per capita income, change in dietary habits and population growth in those countries and their ability to trade more aggressively with non food commodities for their food needs on the world market. It appears that there has not been sufficient adjustment in the world food production volumes to meeting this type of demand.

It is further reported by international experts that there is a reduction in Food Aid from developed countries despite the increasing need for food in light of the Millennium Development Goal, “to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”, and the pervasiveness of civil and cross border conflicts which create massive dislocation of people in Africa and the Middle East.

International trade policies that do not support local subsidies for poor rural farmers in developing countries are also identified as a major contributing factor impacting the most vulnerable groups in the LDC including children, women, rural people and urban poor. Policies that ensure that food security as a priority on national agendas especially in the LDC, and that promote equity fairness in world trade and balance of payments must be part of the solution to this crisis.

### **Challenges to Climate Change**

Climatic changes impacted by environmental conditions exacerbated by technological thrusts, environmental degradation continue to impact food production, world prices and distribution. Compounded by growing populations and the adaptation of environmentally unfriendly developmental activities and consumption choices, many developed countries continue to harvest the bulk and richer portions of the world’s food resources. Denuded by long histories of poor environmental conditions for healthy agriculture and the absence of appropriate technology to facilitate the sustainability self sufficiency in basic food supply, LDC in vulnerable parts of the world are more acutely affected by the current world food crises. Between 2000 and 2004 around 262 million people were affected by climate disasters. Of these 98 per cent lived in developing countries. By 2020 between 75 and 250 million people in sub-Sahara Africa are expected to have less water. In areas where agriculture is dependent on rainfall, yields could drop by 50 per cent. Many livestock breeds cannot be genetically improved fast enough to adapt to climate change.

Many of the every day practices that impact global warming for example, carbon emissions, high fuel consumption, environmentally unfriendly manufacturing and consumption practices, are more pronounced in the developed countries yet and impact the LDC more profoundly.

## **Bio-energy**

The search for alternative to carbon-based fuel is desirable, but when this search leads to the destabilisation of societies because of the reduction and diversion of healthy food supply then that search becomes distorted.

Most of the crops associated with bio-fuel production have been traditionally used as food. The increased diversion of food crops into bio-fuel production will continue exacerbate the food crises and disenfranchise rural people in LDC unless small farmers can be enabled to meet their own fuel needs for equipment and electricity, if they are incorporated in the bio-fuel chain and appropriate environmental management systems are put in place.

The IFHE encourages more research in non-threatening ways to the quality of life for all people. Research in Solar Energy with the active participation of developed and lesser developed countries in active partnership for shared technology, and involving private and public sectors is one alternative that UN organisations like the FAO could facilitate for incremental application of crises free results.

## **Role of FAO**

The IFHE encourages the United Nations through its related groups like the FAO to continue its role as clearinghouse for technical, data sharing, multilateral discussions that seek to identify solutions for the concerns and challenges impacting food security and treat this crises with urgency at all levels.

IFHE encourages the FAO to promote immediate actions and policies that will remove the risk of starvation from individuals, families and communities by providing the guidelines for all countries to make Food Security a priority on national agendas.

IFHE encourages the FAO to prompt developed countries to increase Food Aid to LDC that are most impacted by the crises especially where families and children are dispossessed by drought, conflict, natural disasters and high balance of payment in response to national debts.

IFHE encourages the FAO to seek to declare that international trade policies be relaxed to support poor rural farmers in LDC in respect of the means for production, fertilisers, seeds, technology, roads and water for producing basic and nutritious food crops to meet the needs of local populations.

## **IFHE Commitments**

The International Federation for Home Economics supports the United Nations initiatives through its individual and organisation members globally, and acting at local levels in the over 50 countries represented by its members, and in collaboration with other non-governmental organisations and civil societies is committed to:

- Eradicating hunger and extreme poverty actively participating achieving World Food Summit and Millennium Developmental Goals.
- Becoming more informed about the issues surrounding the world food security crises, bio-energy research, production and its impact on the cost and availability of food, the impact of climate change on the agricultural activities and the availability of food especially to poor countries and the impact of these issues on the everyday lives of individuals and families.

- Pursuing educational activities through community based projects, academic research and curriculum instruction focusing on appropriate actions to mitigate the impact of world food markets on the poor.
- Advancing the idea that poor farmers around the world can be facilitated to access markets and encourage their improved productivity to improve personal income and food circulation through the adoption of trade policies that are sympathetic to their needs and that this be part of the solution to the growing food crises.
- Educating and the re-educating of the media, community based groups and NGOs regarding:
  - the nutritional quality of traditional and emerging foods;
  - the multiple issues and factors impacting the production, availability and access to adequate food supply and the culture related solutions that will meet the needs for improved and sustained quality of life for individuals, families in communities in various cultural settings around the world;
  - food management principles that are appropriate for households and families.
- Including food security; climate changes and the impact on food production and food availability; the issues impacting the emergence of bio-energy production utilising traditional food sources and agricultural resources in primary, secondary and post secondary school curriculum.
- Promoting family gardens, school gardens and community gardens as first steps in buffering the impact of scarcity and rising food prices for vegetables and to improve food and nutrition education and self reliance.
- Promoting healthy food choices and create ways of preparing and serving local foods that eliminate hunger and nutritional deficiency illnesses especially women, children and the aged.
- Promoting greater consumer awareness among citizens, entrepreneurs and policymakers for seeking local solutions to soaring food prices that are pulling many families into poverty.
- Collaborating with other NGOs in advocating for the increased financial support for the most vulnerable citizens of the world inclusive of women, children, the aged, rural and urban poor, through national, world trade and trans-national aid policies.
- Continuously monitor the global developments in respect of the World food crises and encourage groups within the IFHE to systematically share project results and best practices at meetings and conferences.

June 2008

*Prepared by:*

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*President-Elect 2006 - 2008*

*On Behalf of the International Federation for Home Economics*

## IFHE POSITION STATEMENT 2008 HOME ECONOMICS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
FOR HOME ECONOMICS

### IFHE Position Statement 2008 Home Economics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

#### Preamble

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) was established in 1908 following the conception of the profession over a period of more than a decade, informed by various initiatives around the world at that time. This Position Statement acknowledges these historical origins and subsequent Declarations, Glossaries and Definitions adopted by IFHE, yet insists on locating the profession in the contemporary context, looking ahead to viable and progressive visions of Home Economics for the twenty-first century and beyond.

This IFHE Position Statement – *Home Economics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* - serves as a platform to achieve this goal. It intends to encapsulate the diverse nature of the field and hence throws a broad net to embrace its multiplicity and the various ways in which it has adapted to meet specific requirements, in terms of educational, business, social, economic, spiritual, cultural, technological, geographic and political contexts.

This Position Statement can be used to situate Home Economics in contemporary society, and may serve the purpose of providing defensible arguments for individuals and professional groups requiring such support.

#### Home Economics

Home Economics is a field of study and a profession, situated in the human sciences that draws from a range of disciplines to achieve optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities. Its historical origins place Home Economics in the context of the home and household, and this is extended in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to include the wider living environments as we better understand that the capacities, choices and priorities of individuals and families impact at all levels, ranging from the household, to the local and also the global (glocal) community. Home Economists are concerned with the empowerment and well-being of individuals, families and communities, and of facilitating the development of attributes for lifelong learning for paid, unpaid and voluntary work; and living situations. Home Economics professionals are advocates for individuals, families and communities.

Home Economics content draws from multiple disciplines, synthesising these through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary inquiry. This coalescing of disciplinary knowledge is essential because the phenomena and challenges of everyday life are not typically one-dimensional. The content (disciplinary bases) from which studies of Home Economics draw is dependent upon the context, but might include: food, nutrition and health; textiles and clothing; shelter and housing; consumerism and consumer science; household management; design and technology; food science and hospitality; human development and family studies; education and community services and much more.

The capacity to draw from such disciplinary diversity is a strength of the profession, allowing for the development of specific interpretations of the field, as relevant to the context. This disciplinary diversity coupled with the aim of achieving optimal and sustainable living means that Home Economics has the potential to be influential in all sectors of society by intervening and transforming political, social, cultural, ecological, economic and technological systems, at global levels. This is driven by the ethics of the profession, based on the values of caring, sharing, justice, responsibility, communicating, reflection and visionary foresight.

Home Economics can be clarified by four dimensions or areas of practice:

- As an *academic discipline* to educate new scholars, to conduct research and to create new knowledge and ways of thinking for professionals and for society.
- As an arena for *everyday living* in households, families and communities for developing human growth potential and human necessities or basic needs to be met.
- As a *curriculum area* that facilitates students to discover and further develop their own resources and capabilities to be used in their personal life, by directing their professional decisions and actions or preparing them for life.
- As a *societal arena to influence and develop policy* to advocate for individuals, families and communities to achieve empowerment and well-being, to utilise transformative practices, and to facilitate sustainable futures.

To be successful in these four dimensions of practice means that the profession is constantly evolving, and there will always be new ways of performing the profession. This is an important characteristic of the profession, linking with the twenty-first century requirement for all people to be “expert novices”, that is, good at learning new things, given that society is constantly and rapidly changing with new and emergent issues and challenges.

### **Essential Dimensions of Home Economics**

The thread or essential ingredient that all subjects, courses of study and professionals identifying as Home Economists must exhibit has at least three essential dimensions:

- A focus on fundamental needs and practical concerns of individuals and family in everyday life and their importance both at the individual and near community levels, and also at societal and global levels so that well-being can be enhanced in an ever changing and ever challenging environment.
- The integration of knowledge, processes and practical skills from multiple disciplines synthesised through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary inquiry and pertinent paradigms; AND
- Demonstrated capacity to take critical/transformational/emancipatory action to enhance well-being and to advocate for individuals, families and communities at all levels and sectors of society.
- Ensuring the interplay of these dimensions of Home Economics is the basis upon which the profession can be sustained into the future. Because of these attributes, Home Economics is distinctively positioned to collaborate with other professionals.

### **The name “Home Economics”**

The preferred name of the field of study and profession is “Home Economics”. Historical records of the Federation document the challenges various names, titles and terminology have posed for IFHE, including the complexity of translation. Internationally, the field of study has consistently retained the name Home Economics and is recognised both within and beyond the boundaries of the profession. The Federation is committed to re-branding and repositioning, not renaming the profession.

### **Impact of the profession**

Home Economics is a vital profession currently enjoying renewed attention in the present era. Our contemporary world is characterised as one of unprecedented transition from industrial to knowledge-based culture and globalised economy, with all encompassing effects on society and culture. The information age is complex, diverse and unpredictable, yet has a strong commitment to retaining those elements of society that are valued, while looking ahead to the imperative of improving the world in which we all live such that sustainable development is possible. Herein lies the potential for Home Economics and the reason for renewed attention to the field of study, as this is the key imperative of the profession.

Examples of enacting the transformative powers of Home Economics professionals include:

- Home Economics professionals were instrumental to instituting the 1994 International Year of the Family which centred “family” as a political issue and has impacted on family life in many countries of the world.
- Poverty alleviation, gender equality and social justice concerns are a priority of Home Economics professionals, with many projects and initiatives conducted in such areas.
- IFHE is an International Non Governmental Organisation (INGO), having consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC, FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF) and with the Council of Europe.
- Home Economists partner with other Non-Governmental Organisations to improve the lot of families world wide. Specific areas of collaboration/cooperation include: Peace Education, gender issues/women’s empowerment, women’s reproductive issues, HIV/AIDS, intervention projects for families in distress and other human rights issues.
- Home Economists are active in lobbying for issues that will improve the well-being of a diversity of families and households.
- Home Economists serve as consultants in major businesses and organisations dealing with personal Home Economics, care and consumer services. They are also active entrepreneurs in their own rights.
- The current four-year theme on Sustainable Development for World Home Economics Day is a strong stand that impacts on family life positively.
- Home Economists are strong advocates for individual and family well-being worldwide, evident in for example the development of relevant curriculum for schools and universities.

### **Directions for the Decade**

The focus on the decade ahead is on future proofing, which describes the elusive process of trying to anticipate future developments, so that action can be taken to minimise possible negative consequences, and to seize opportunities. Future proofing the Home Economics profession and the Federation is a challenging task but one which is necessary to ensure a sustainable vision both for the profession, and for individual members. The International Federation for Home Economics has commenced its future-proofing strategy by focussing on questions of sustainability, advocacy and the active creation of preferred futures for Home Economics, relevant disciplinary fields, and the profession itself, while critically reflecting upon and being informed by its historical roots. The 2008 IFHE World Congress *Home Economics: Reflecting on the past; Creating the future*, is a future oriented first step towards this strategy, as is the development of this Position Statement, *Home Economics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.

*Prepared by the Think Tank Committee of IFHE in consultation with internationally prominent Home Economics scholars and members of the Federation 2005 - 2007, under the leadership of Dr Donna PENDERGAST. This is an organic document developed for the next decade with the intention of ongoing review and providing a foundation for the work of the Federation, its individual and organisational members.*

## SOURCES

### Sources MDG 1:

#### “Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger”

#### IFHE Objectives (Vision Annual Meeting 2009):

1. Increase IFHE global recognition.
2. Increase membership worldwide.
3. Improve IFHE’s communication (internally and externally).
4. Improve financial viability of IFHE.
5. Undertake efforts to improve quality of life, to support the UN Millennium Goals and the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.
6. To enhance professional development and collaboration for members.

#### IFHE Position Paper on the Eradication of Poverty 2003

#### IFHE Position Statement 2008:

Home Economics is

- an academic discipline
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- a curriculum area
- a societal arena to influence and develop policy.

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