



# Economic and Social Council

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## Commission for Social Development

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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the  
twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: Priority  
Theme: Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for  
sustainable livelihoods, well-being, and dignity for all:  
eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions  
to achieve the 2030 Agenda**

### **Statement submitted by International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE), a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

This statement is presented by the International Federation for Home Economics, the only global organization representing Home Economics and related fields. Home economists maintain that homes are environments where individuals reach their full potential, live a life of dignity, and develop and express their global and local interdependence. While Home Economics supports economic development and poverty reduction through the provision of skills that lend easily to entrepreneurship, it is in emergency situations, human and natural disasters, where the support provided by a well-developed, respected, and funded Home Economics education system can really shine. Home Economists are calling for the use of policy, funding and program evaluation tools that revalue sharing and exchange outside an economized perspective. Home Economics education prepares households to provide care for their members by teaching food and financial literacy as well as sanitation and emergency preparedness.

COVID was a universal experience. Regardless of the economic or technological status of a region, be it under-developed, developing and developed, the entire human family was impacted. As the 60th Session of the UN Commission on Social Development prepares to focus on the “Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda” the International Federation for Home Economics calls for a complete accounting of the ways in which the existing structures either supported or failed households seeking to feed and care for their members during an unfolding health, policy and economic crisis.

While best known for teaching the basics of household management to each generation, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that teacher educators, including Home Economists are valuable frontline workers because they are able to support individuals and families to adopt new strategies and behaviors that can build resilience. Because emergency preparedness is embedded into Home Economics as a discipline, because hygiene and home safety are foundational to the home economics as a discipline and because home economists can focus on low technology solutions any society that embeds home economics literacy into educational programs as recovery from COVID-19 is planned will be better positioned to achieve SDGs related to the reduction of poverty and hunger.

Food and Nutrition literacy equips the families for identification of novel ways to fulfil nutritional needs through a variety of available food resources. It builds resilience in food selection and preparation that can assure prevention of malnutrition and relevant morbidity. COVID-19 has witnessed the role of good nutrition in reducing the burden of infection related complications, and home economics education provides a variety of technical skills for safeguarding good nutrition. The increasing rise of for-profit opportunities for “on-demand” food, often with low nutritional value, has resulted in families that do not know how to cook and the off-siting of food production from households also reduces the opportunity for food related exchanges with neighboring households. As COVID-19 has demonstrated, this on-demand, prepared food expectation leaves people vulnerable in the case of an emergency, when off-site production of food is snarled by supply chain issues or broken by “lock-downs” of neighborhoods. A positive adaptation to COVID-19 was the sharing of food resources through formal and informal community food banks. Acting in solidarity, not for profit, community driven sharing reduced food waste and provided a solution to food chain breakdowns. Producing hope through community-based action, food sharing reduces the shame and “othering” associated with food

pantries by being openly available to all households regardless of income or class, and thereby reframes food security.

The Building Community Capacity approach to human development has identified affiliation or social relations not only as a central capability but a crucial one for it can be an area of fertile functioning. Families are the primary social relations essential for human development as they provide care that goes beyond the material economy. Families serve as an area of fertile functioning providing for the formation and exercise of other central capabilities of its members. Families that are given opportunities to develop Home Economics literacies, such as food literacy can maximize resources and create an environment that supports bodily health and integrity, imagination, reason, play, as well as social and environmental concern. Thus, the economic entitlements given to families for poverty reduction like cash transfers would have a multiplying effect that goes beyond financial or food security.

In many developing countries, the care economy of the family, though largely undervalued in development measures, is the vital social structure that enabled families to survive and recover from the negative impacts of COVID-19. Through the lockdowns that disturbed supply chains and institutional efficiency, families thrived through the sharing of food, health, and information resources. Families have turned to home gardening to augment their food supply. Home economists shared creative ways of preparing nutritious and tasty meals out of relief goods. Knowledge sharing on effective ways of dealing with stress from the work-school home arrangements were organized by various home economics organizations. There is great need to strengthen opportunities to develop home economics literacies and harness the cooperation within families especially in times of crisis. During the recovery from COVID-19, an assessment of food sharing infrastructure should be commissioned to plan and fund an increase in food literacy and inclusive, community-based access to shared food.

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