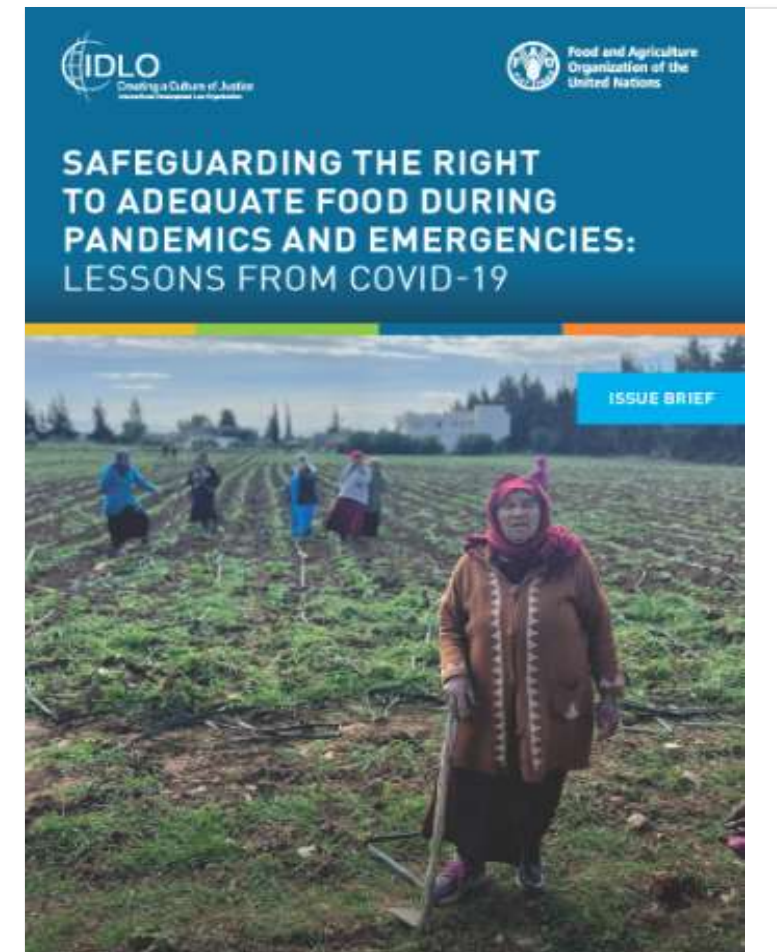
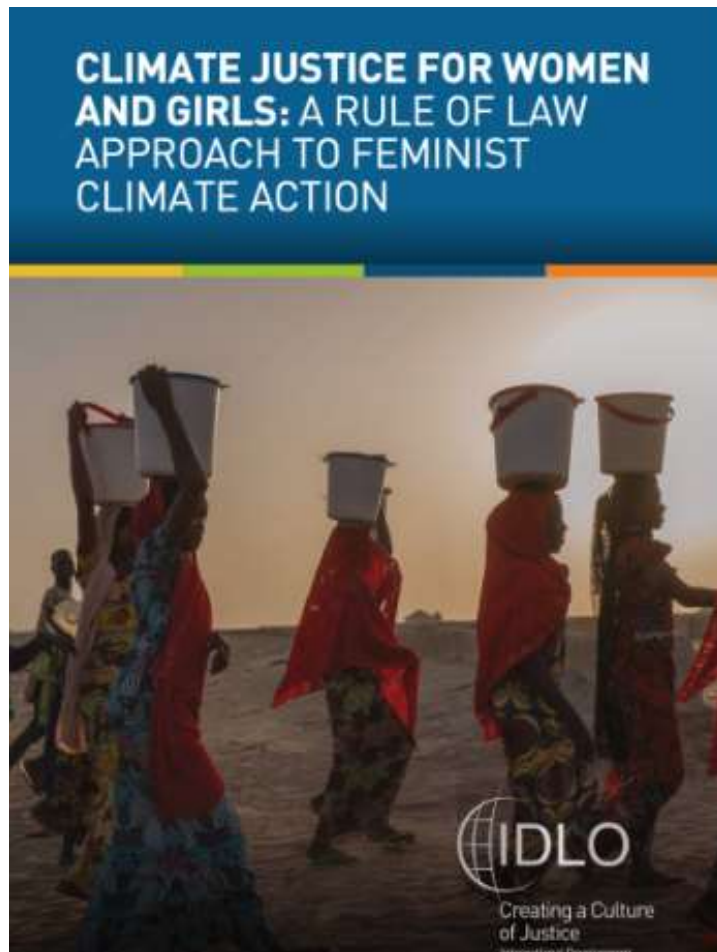




Creating a Culture
of Justice

International Development
Law Organization

How to write a policy brief



What is a policy brief?

- **A key tool to present research and recommendations to a non-specialized audience.**
- **Clear and concise stand-alone document that focuses on a single topic.**
- **Distills research findings in plain language and draws clear links to policy initiatives.**

Planning your policy brief

Vital elements of an influential policy brief:

- **Purpose**
- **Audience**
- **Content**
- **Structure**

Purpose

To inform readers of a particular issue, suggest possible policy options, and make recommendations.

State your purpose from the start:

- **maintain a laser focus on your direction**
- **communicate the urgency of the issue**
- **focus on the benefits and advantages of following your policy advice**

Audience

Policy briefs should be accessible and targeted to a specific audience.

Before you begin writing, establish:

- **who your prospective readers are**
- **their interest in and level of knowledge of the subject**
- **the information they will need to make a decision**
- **their openness to your recommendations**

Structure

- **The structure should lead the reader from problem to solution.**
- **Be clear about your policy recommendations and how they are supported by evidence.**
- **It should be audience-specific and reflect each audience's interests.**

Tips:

- ❑ ***Some typical section headings are summary, context, analysis/discussion, considerations, conclusion/recommendation.***

Structure

Key elements of an effective structure

- **Executive summary**
- **Introduction**
- **Overview of the research or problem**
- **Examination of the findings**
- **Concluding section that explains the policy recommendations and implications of the research**

Policy brief template

- **There is no one-size-fits-all approach to writing policy briefs because the topic and audience will shape each one.**
- **However, effective policy briefs tend to contain the same key elements and therefore have similar structures.**

Executive summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ensuring adequate food and nutrition for all is a core challenge facing the international community. Around 260 million people faced acute food insecurity in 2022 in 58 countries and territories, reflecting an increase of nearly 65 million people over the preceding year.¹ Global hunger affected around 9.2% of the world population in 2022 (or between 691 and 783 million people). This is a 7.9% increase or 122 million more compared to pre Covid-19 levels. In addition, 3.1 billion were unable to afford a healthy diet.² Food insecurity has increased due to intersecting and compounding crises, including the adverse effects of climate change, rising costs of living due to economic shocks, and the increasing prevalence of violent conflict, as well as growing inequalities exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.³ Prevailing patterns of food production, distribution, and consumption deplete natural resources and accelerate climate change,⁴ and are not resilient to different types of shocks.⁵ In order to reverse these trends, food systems must be transformed.⁶

With its emphasis on the rule of law as an enabler of peace, justice, and inclusion, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 can promote the transformation of food systems, acting as an enabler of efforts to deliver on SDG 2's promise of zero hunger. It is evident that persistent disparities and discriminatory practices pervade food systems, underscoring the close linkage of the causes of food insecurity to systemic or structural injustices. Efforts to strengthen the rule of law as an accelerator of progress toward zero hunger is consistent not only with the 2030 Agenda, but with the vision and aims of the landmark UN Food Systems Summit in 2021.⁷

Key elements to foster the transformation of food systems through the rule of law include:

- Empowering the most food insecure people to claim their rights
- Strengthening food systems governance through sound legal and regulatory frameworks and effective institutions
- Improving and safeguarding equitable access to land, water, and natural resources

- **Every policy brief should open with a short summary.**
- **This could take the form of a few bullet points or a short paragraph or two.**
- **Regardless of which style you choose, condense the essence of the brief down to a few sentences.**

- **The introduction should set up the rest of the document and clearly convey your argument.**
- **The goal is to leave your readers with a clear sense of what your research is about while enticing them to continue reading.**



Research overview

**Provide a summary of the facts to describe the issues, contexts, and research methods.
Focus on two main elements:**

- **Research approach:** explain how the study was conducted, who conducted it, how the data was collected, and any other relevant background information.
- **Research results:** paint a general picture of the research findings before moving on to the specifics.

Examination of the findings

- This section should interpret the data in a way that is accessible and clearly connected to your policy advice.
- The goal is to be convincing but ensure that your analysis is balanced and defensible.

EMPOWERING THE MOST FOOD INSECURE PEOPLE TO CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS



Those most vulnerable to food insecurity are often those least able to access justice or make their voices heard in the governance of food systems, and those most likely to experience exclusion and marginalisation in general. Realising the right to adequate food requires transformative action based on the rule of law to tackle internal inequalities among people, supporting them to claim and defend their rights and contribute to policymaking. Different forms of empowerment can support marginalised and excluded communities in food systems.

Legal empowerment is an approach that provides people with the knowledge, confidence, skills, and tools to engage with laws and institutions that affect the conditions and ways in which they produce, access, and consume food. Empowered actors are better able to participate in decision-making processes, helping build greater trust and confidence in

public institutions and the justice system in the context of food security and nutrition. Legal empowerment actions relevant to the most food insecure people might include legal education and access to legal aid, processing civil claims and human rights defenders concerned with right to adequate food and other specific rights issues in food systems, such as land and natural resources rights, improving access to data and information, and boosting effective participation in food systems decision-making. The needs and voices of those most at risk of being left behind in efforts to achieve food security must be heard in food systems policymaking and programming to assess they fully enjoy their rights as enshrined in international human rights instruments.

Women and girls

Gendered power relations, conservative social norms, and systemic forms of discrimination

STRENGTHENING FOOD SYSTEMS GOVERNANCE THROUGH SOUND LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS AND EFFECTIVE INSTITUTIONS

Laws and institutions are essential to the full realisation of human rights, including the right to adequate food. Fair and equitable laws govern equity, discrimination, and exclusion in food systems. They are important tools for the demarcation of international norms and best practices to ensure an adequate level of protection for consumers through safety standards and trade-related measures. Legal and regulatory frameworks are also needed to ensure sustainable and responsible investment in the food sector, to secure economic opportunities for smallholder farmers, and other actors in food supply chains, and to protect the rights of marginalised communities from the negative environmental and social impacts of investment in food systems. Integration of the right to adequate food into domestic legal systems, including through constitutional provisions, will activate mechanisms making the right to food justiciable in court, provide remedies and redress, and ultimately render States more accountable for progressive realisation of the right to food.¹⁰

Food systems governance encompasses the set of rules, norms, and practices that shape policies and decisions affecting food systems.¹¹ This includes the mechanisms and institutions through which food systems actors articulate their interests, exercise their rights, meet their obligations, and mediate

their differences.¹² Current governance mechanisms are fragmented and weak, with limited recognised participation mechanisms that enable transparency and accountability in decision-making.¹³ Ensuring sustainable and resilient food systems entails addressing these weaknesses through the establishment of accountable and transparent institutions, with frameworks that enable participatory and inclusive policy development, dissemination, and monitoring. It also demands the enhancement of the justice sector, including OJ mechanisms, to ensure access to justice for excluded and marginalised groups claiming their right to adequate food and other related rights in the context of food security, and to resolve disputes arising between different food systems actors.

Improving access to justice for people and communities seeking food security

Access to justice is key to ensuring fulfilment of the right to adequate food. Without access to justice, people are unable to exercise their rights, challenge discrimination, seek redress for grievances, or hold decision-makers accountable.¹⁴ Increasing judicial capacity may increase in the absence of remedial and redress mechanisms, without securing and enforcement of protection orders for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, for example, survivors may be unable to work and

ENHANCING AND SAFEGUARDING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO LAND, WATER, AND NATURAL RESOURCES



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Arable land, fresh water, and other natural resources like forests, rangelands, and fisheries are foundational to the food security and the global "water budget" is under acute pressure, indicating that human use of natural resources is exceeding planetary boundaries.¹⁵ Growing growth in the production of food systems and associated environmental harms have deleterious implications for achievement of the aim of zero hunger by 2030.¹⁶

Moreover, despite the dependence of almost all people and countries on agriculture for food production, land degradation is intensifying and the global "water budget" is under acute pressure, indicating that human use of natural resources is exceeding planetary boundaries.¹⁵ Growing growth in the production of food systems and associated environmental harms have deleterious implications for achievement of the aim of zero hunger by 2030.¹⁶

Social structures determine the sustainability of natural resources, reducing poverty and inequality requires equitable access to land and natural resources. The critical factors to tackle these issues lie in establishing secure tenure and effective governance and systems.¹⁷ Fair and inclusive laws, equitable and

Conclusion or recommendation

- This final section should detail the actions recommended by research findings.
- Draw the link for your readers between the research findings and your recommendations.
- Use persuasive language to present your recommendations, but ensure that all arguments are rooted firmly and clearly in evidence produced by the research.
- You want your readers to be completely convinced that yours is the best advice.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Empower food insecure people and communities
Legal empowerment and protection of civic space can enable people and communities to claim their right to adequate food and nutrition, while inclusive policymaking ensures that food policies are informed by and responsive to their needs. Priority must be given to the most food insecure people: women and girls, youth and children, Indigenous peoples, smallholder farmers, pastoralists, and people on the move including migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons.

2. Embrace a feminist approach to rule of law and food security
The efforts of women and girls to realise food security are affected by gender-based forms of exclusion, marginalisation, and discrimination. Food systems transformation must empower women and girls to claim their rights, integrate women's active engagement in food policy decision-making at all levels, and guarantee women's rights to land and natural resources.

3. Improve food systems governance
Fair and effective laws including constitutional provisions guaranteeing the right to adequate food, and transparent and accessible institutions are essential to food systems transformation, especially efforts to ensure access to justice for people and communities seeking to realise their rights to food and nutrition, enable inclusive decision-making, promote responsible investment, and foster sustainability and resilience.

4. Invest in durable rule of law solutions to root causes of food insecurity
The root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition are diverse and complex, and in many contexts relate to the intersection of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding challenges; working at this nexus is essential to ensuring holistic and durable solutions to food insecurity.

RULE OF LAW FOR FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

5. Strengthen equitable land, water, and natural resource governance
The ability of people and communities to realise their rights to food and nutrition is largely dependent on secure access to land, water, and natural resources. Food systems transformation must foster land tenure systems that protect diverse forms of tenure, including customary rights to land and other resources, and reduce conflict over land and other resources.

6. Steer food systems transformation within planetary sustainability boundaries
The global climate crisis and mounting biodiversity loss will have significant adverse implications for the world's ability to produce and distribute adequate food for all. The rule of law can play a crucial role in ensuring that food systems transformation contributes to protection of biodiversity and to processes of climate mitigation and adaptation.

7. Reinforce the role of law as an enabler of food systems transformation
Mobilising partnerships between States and other stakeholders and supporting cooperation through multilateral frameworks, including the SDGs and the UN Food Systems Summit will foster an inclusive, coordinated, and intersectoral approach to food systems transformation that is grounded in the rule of law. Efforts must also be predicated on a convincing evidence base produced through policy-relevant research.

RULE OF LAW FOR FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

Conclusion or recommendation

Examine the implications and the recommendations produced by the research.

- **Implications are the effects that the research could have in the future. They are a soft but persuasive approach to describe the potential consequences of particular policies.**
- **Follow up the implications with your recommendations. Beyond being descriptive, your recommendations should act as a call to action by stating precise, relevant, credible, and feasible next steps.**

CONCLUSION

The interactions among climate change, conflict, and violence are complex. There is no simple causal relationship between climate change and conflict, even though there is a growing consensus between fragility and vulnerability to climate change. Climate change is increasingly converging with and compounds a range of other contextual factors which increase risks to peace and stability, such as land scarcity, pastoral mobility, and urban-rural disparities. Climate change can aggravate drivers of conflict and function as a threat multiplier, and its effects can contribute not only to conflict, but also to the resilience of communities to the effects of climate change.

Role of law interventions described in the previous section and supported by the case studies can, in many contexts, act as effective means to address the effects of climate change on conflict and violence, including limiting armed and increased competition over land and natural resources, increase migration and changing pastoral mobility patterns, and deteriorating livelihood conditions. While managing climate security risks will require action far beyond the role of law sector, **the role of law can serve as a critical framework for enhancing climate action and mitigating climate security risks.** Policymakers and practitioners engaging in contexts affected by the effects of climate change, insecurity, and conflict must develop and support holistic engagements integrating both climate adaptation and rule of law dimensions, with special attention to the participation and leadership of the most climate-vulnerable communities in climate-related decision-making.

There are specific approaches, policies, and tools in the rule of law sector that can contribute to reducing the threat of climate insecurity and conflict. Justice and inclusion are neither preconditions nor ends in themselves, but rather processes and tools that are at the centre of climate change analysis and response, foregrounding the rights, needs, and expectations of those most affected by climate change. **People-centred justice systems** can allow those most affected by climate change to claim their rights and seek redress for grievances. Key people-centred justice approaches to climate insecurity might include:

- Development of capacities in both the formal justice and IJ systems to protect people and communities' rights to land and natural resources and address climate-related disputes
- Legal empowerment and protection of resources to enable people and communities to claim their environmental rights, with priority given to those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including women and girls, indigenous peoples, and climate migrants, and those disproportionately affected by conflict and insecurity, such as youth

The effects of climate change also challenge state effectiveness and legitimacy. These can be mediated by more **inclusive governance arrangements** based on the rule of law. Key inclusive governance approaches to climate insecurity might include:

- Strengthening frameworks for governance and the peaceful resolution of disputes over land and natural resources, to reduce conflict risks related to competitive and scarce resources

Small Photo: Rule of Law Responses to Climate Insecurity



Climate-related threats to peace and security must be addressed through coherent **multilateral action at all levels**, predicted on realisation of the SDGs, especially SDG 13 and 16, and grounded in the 2030 Agenda's pledge to leave no one behind. Justice must be rooted at the heart of conflict prevention. Successful rule of law approaches to climate:

- Establishing effective, inclusive, and transparent institutions for climate-resilient development at local, sub-national, and national levels

Climate insecurity will depend upon enhanced partnerships, both to support to grassroots initiatives and building partnerships at the international level in the area of climate and security, and increased funding dedicated to community-led or locally-driven initiatives climate justice initiatives.

Small Photo: Rule of Law Responses to Climate Insecurity

Designing your policy brief

The design and presentation of your brief are important considerations and can help keep the reader engaged.

- **Titles and headings**
- **Sidebars**
- **Lists**
- **Graphics**
- **Pictures**