



SOUTH ASIA INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC LAW NETWORK

SOUTH ASIA INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC LAW NETWORK'S
THIRD BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

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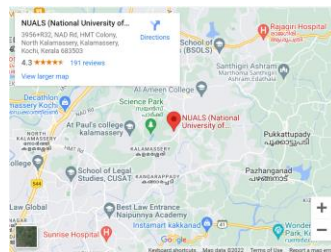
FOOD SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL LAW: CRITICAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

19th – 20th December 2022
Kochi, Kerala, India

South Asia International Economic Law Network (SAIELN) is hosting its third biennial conference, as part of the curriculum under the WTO Chairs Programme, in association with the National University of Advanced Legal Studies (NUALS), Kochi, Kerala.

Date: Monday, 19th December 2022 – Tuesday, 20th December 2022.

Venue: National University of Advanced Legal Studies (NUALS) campus, HMT Colony, North Kalamassery, Kalamassery, Kochi, Kerala 683503



Interested participants are requested to [register here](#)

Queries related to the conference and the process of submission can be emailed to SAIELN's organising committee (E: southasiaiel@gmail.com) or Mr. Pushkar Reddy, Joint Secretary (E: pushkar.ctil@iift.edu; M: +91 9739368370).



FOOD SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

The world's population is projected to increase to 9.8 billion by 2050. However, 828 million people – close to 10% of the world's population – still face hunger. The number of undernourished people grew by as many as 150 million. After steadily declining for a decade, world hunger is once again on the rise and SDG 2 (zero hunger) is unlikely to be met by 2030.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the acute problems of hunger and malnutrition. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has compounded this problem. Increasing occurrences of extreme climate events have disrupted global supply chains, further impeding progress towards food security, especially in low-income countries. With food and energy prices increasing, the situation in both developing and developed countries is fast deteriorating.

This alarming reality hides a complex paradox – there is more than enough food produced in the world to feed everyone on the planet, and yet 10% of the world population continues to suffer from hunger. Small farmers, herders, and fishermen who produce about 70% of the global food supply remain vulnerable to food insecurity. About 14 million children under the age of five suffer from acute malnutrition.

According to the FAO, “food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”. A person is ‘food insecure’ when he lacks regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development– whether due to unavailability of food and/or lack of resources to obtain food.

While several instruments recognize and reiterate the right to food as a human right under international law, it is most comprehensively addressed under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Article 11.1 of the ICESCR recognizes the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, which includes access to “adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions”. The Declaration of Nyéléni, signed in 2007, introduced the concept of “food sovereignty”. Food sovereignty, according to the Declaration, is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.

For countries working towards food security, food sovereignty requires utilizing state-of-the-art technologies, scientific knowledge of agricultural systems, and nutrition to improve the methods of production, conservation, and distribution of food. Agricultural innovation becomes imperative to increase productivity and security to the global food supply. For instance, farm automation, including automated harvesters, drones, autonomous tractors, seeding, and weeding can help bring together agricultural machinery, computer systems, electronics, chemical sensors, and data management to reduce labour time, promote higher yields, and efficient use of resources. Similarly, indoor vertical farming, through hydroponics or aeroponics, enables producers to get healthier and bigger yields by controlling variables such as light, temperature, water, and sometimes, carbon dioxide levels.

It is vital to develop sustainable, inclusive, healthy and resilient food systems. Technologies must be developed to reduce the environmental and climate impact of the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food, forestry and fishery products. It is important to build resilience in production and supply chains to increase agricultural productivity. Food systems must be climate-friendly and reduce Green House Gases. Policy action in this area can help prevent food loss and control food waste. A global food system that is more productive, more inclusive of poor and marginalized populations, environmentally sustainable and resilient, and able to deliver healthy and nutritious diets to all is critical to realising the goal of food security.

Modern trade agreements have attempted to further this cause through dedicated chapters on the promotion of sustainable food systems. At the WTO, the importance of this objective was highlighted in the Twelfth Ministerial Conference in Geneva with the Ministerial Declaration on Responding to Modern Sanitary and Phytosanitary Challenges. The Declaration highlighted the importance of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures in supporting sustainable agricultural growth and agricultural practices that aid in addressing climate change and global food insecurity.

Aside from agriculture, it is equally important to promote 'Blue Economy' and transition to sustainable fishing practices, which protect ocean health and marine ecosystems against threats such as acidification, pollution, ocean warming, eutrophication and fishery collapse. Countries must work towards sustainable management of ocean resources, carbon sequestration, coastal protection, and waste disposal to realise SDG 14 relating to conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

While sound policy making is critical in achieving these goals at the national level, international economic law can help in establishing a legal framework for trade that prioritises food security and work towards improving, not only food production and access where it is scarce, but also improving economic as well as sustainable access to food by creating jobs, raising income and ensuring the livelihood of farmers.

At the WTO, discussions on food security began in the early 2000s and became part of the 2001 Doha Ministerial Conference. The first significant breakthrough came during the 2013 Bali Ministerial Conference where Members adopted the Ministerial Decision on Public Stockholding for Food Security Purposes. Following the 2013 Bali Ministerial Conference, the 2015 Nairobi Ministerial Conference abolished agricultural export subsidies to prevent trade distortions in an effort to end hunger and achieve food security.

The Twelfth Ministerial Conference brought forth other important outcomes on food security and sustainable food practices. First, the Ministerial Declaration on the Emergency Response to Food Insecurity reinforced Members' commitment to take concrete steps to improve the functioning and long-term resilience of global markets for food and agriculture. Second, the Ministerial Decision on the Exemption of WFP Food Purchases from Export Prohibitions or Restrictions requires Members to not impose export prohibitions or restrictions on foodstuffs purchased for non-commercial humanitarian purposes by the WFP in view of rising hunger levels. Third, the Ministerial Decision on the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies represents a historic milestone in the promotion of sustainability by prohibiting harmful fisheries subsidies that have depleted the world's fish stocks.

Against this backdrop, the SAIELN's third biennial conference aims to provide a platform for experts, policymakers, lawyers, academics, economists, and civil society partners to exchange views on the multifaceted challenges of food security and offer innovative legal and policy solutions to address them.

An abstract of 500 words should be submitted no later than 20 November 2022. The results shall be announced by 25 November 2022. The final paper (6000-8000 words) should be submitted by 31st March 2023. Submissions should be sent to - southasiaiel@gmail.com.

The Organising Committee may publish selected articles in a special issue of a reputed international journal.

THEMES AND TOPICS FOR THE CONFERENCE:


1. The Co-ordination of International Human Rights Law and International Economic Law in Achieving Food Security
2. The Right to Food and International Economic Law
3. The Right to Food, the Right to Health, and Law and Policy: National and International Interactions
4. The Danger of Climate Change to Food Security

5. Ensuring Food Security in Future Pandemics and International Conflicts
6. Promoting Food Security through Public Stock Holding
7. Sustainable Fishing Practices and the Preservation of Fish Stock for Food Security
8. Role of Blue Economy in Promoting Food Security
9. Innovation in Agriculture to Tackle Food Security – We Particularly Welcome Interdisciplinary Approaches
10. Harnessing Free Trade Agreements for Sustainable Agricultural Practices
11. The Role of International Organisations and Institutions in Promoting Food Security (and Insecurity) – We Welcome Critical Approaches
12. Are International Trade and Investment Rules Fuelling Hunger? How to Identify Legal and Policy Gaps and Obstacles?
13. Trade and Food Distribution: Identifying the Gaps in the Interactions Between National and International Norms and Regulations
14. International Dispute Settlement – How States Protect and Litigate their Rights to Regulate Food Production and Distribution
15. Litigating Hunger: How to Provide Remedies to Affected Populations?
16. Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Global Food Trade Policy and Regulation – We Welcome Political Economy Perspectives
17. Civil Society Perspectives on Food Security, Law, and Policy – We particularly Welcome Lived Experienced and Grassroot Expertise


We welcome critical and interdisciplinary perspectives, South Asian, and global cases studies and approaches.

THE PICKER-NANWANI PRIZE

The Picker-Nanwani Prize will be awarded to the best paper submitted as part of the conference (by 31 March 2023). The best paper will also be published in a reputed international journal.



Professor Nanwani has more than 30 years of experience in international governance organizations. He served as the Deputy Head for Law and Policy Reform and Lead Counsel at the Asian Development Bank, Manila and the Counsel for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. In addition to being a patron to SAIELN, Professor Nanwani is a member of the Executive Council of the Society of International Economic Law (SIEL) and sponsors the Baetens-Caiado prize for the best essay in the Postgraduate and Early Professionals/ Academics Network of the SIEL.



Professor Picker has more than 20 years of experience in teaching International Economic Law (IEL) and is currently serving as the Executive Dean, Faculty of Business Law, University of Wollongong in addition to being a patron of SAIELN. He was one of the Co-Chairs of the Founding Committee of SIEL and served as the Founding Executive Vice President of the organization from 2007 to 2014. Professor Picker facilitated the creation of numerous regional IEL networks, including the Asian IEL Network, RED Latin America, the African IEL Network, and most recently the SAIELN.

THE PICKER-NANWANI FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FUND

The Picker-Nanwani Financial Assistance Fund will provide financial assistance to candidates short-listed for paper presentations at SAIELN's Third Biennial Conference on 19th and 20th December 2022. The fund will cover transportation, accommodation and dining expenses of candidates in need of financial aid.

Interested participants may email organisers at southasiaiel@gmail.com requesting for financial assistance under the Picker-Nanwani Financial Assistance Fund. Requests for financial assistance will be assessed on need basis by the co-chairs of SAIELN and the members of SAIELN's organizing committee