



farley: What is the human right to food?

messer: The human right to food refers to a legal system, based in the United Nations, that asserts that every individual human being has a basic right to adequate food. Adequate food is defined, increasingly, as food security, which means that individuals have access to nutritionally adequate food in a way that protects their human dignity, and also allows for food security for upcoming generations.

There's now a sustainability component as well. One of the important aspects of this evolving definition is the clash between a rights-based approach that says every individual has a right to adequate food and a needs-based approach that says we have an obligation to feed people.

According to the needs-based approach that's what takes precedence, not whether they have rights. Those two perspectives are being brought together by saying every individual has a right to adequate food with dignity, which then includes all these aspects of food security, as well as sustainability.

farley:

ing market participation, but economic growth is not necessarily a solution for poverty and hunger. It sometimes clashes with solutions for small farmers who are disadvantaged by those policies in the interim.

That's where some combination of economic perspectives, that are looking for efficiencies, and religious perspectives, that are looking at the well-being of every human being, on human rights comes in.

farley: Who do you view as the most vulnerable populations, geographically or otherwise? What types of people or regional demographics are most affected by hunger?

messer: Statistically the numbers are greatest in South and Southeast Asia, and next greatest in Sub-Saharan Africa. What I have found throughout the last twenty years?

at the way in which Pope Francis is being cited as a basis for other religious leaders trying to rethink what their role in the world could be. The focus on the principle of subsidiarity says that all human beings have responsibilities to think about issues of human dignity, and how to protect, to connect and to care for those who are less advantaged around us. Finally, the principles of looking at the common good and affirmation of human dignity as a value in itself communicate a powerful message that everyone, regardless of religious persuasion or connection to Roman Catholicism, can find a useful point of reference for thinking about areas of