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Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of 2025 which is special edition of *ESR Review*, which looks at the right to food and nutrition through a public health lens and asks the question: What does food justice look like?

About 63 per cent of South African households are food insecure, and about 17 per cent, critically undernourished. At an individual level, that means about 20 million people struggle daily to access adequate food and nutrition. At the same time, almost 50 per cent of South African adults, and roughly 13 per cent of children under 5 years, are now overweight or obese – and this number is steadily increasing.

Addressing this double burden of malnutrition requires a public health approach, encompassing a range of integrated legislative measures, comprehensive policies, and targeted investments to effect change.

This first part of our special edition of *ESR Review* thus explores what a human rights-based approach to food and nutrition should entail, highlighting progress and ongoing challenges in South Africa's food system. The focus is on developments for improving food and nutrition access and outcomes, and the aim is to explore where progress has been made, as well as where opportunities lie to strengthen legal, policy, and regulatory measures for creating a healthier food environment.

Our first article by Petronell Kruger and Safura Abdool Karim examines who should be responsible for regulating the marketing of unhealthy food to children, considering the mandate, infrastructure, and implementation methods of different government entities.

The second article deals with the legal obligations associated with the right to food by Nastasia Thebaud-Bouillon-Njenga and Michael Addaney, in Africa in the context of the climate crisis. It reiterates the interconnectedness of climate change and food security and calls for sustainable food system transformation.

The third article by Reece Pierce-Jones weighs in on public policy as an effective intervention against child and maternal malnutrition in South Africa, focusing on obesity to illustrate the intersection of food, nutrition, and health.

Our fourth article by Paul Hoffman and Favour Funke Akanbi looks at food security within the human rights architecture in South Africa. It highlights the issue of food waste and explores challenges and legal opportunities regarding recycling and redistributing surplus food to those in need.

This edition also features an update on the Expert Symposium on Social Justice, Hunger, and the Constitution, hosted by the Centre of Social Justice at Stellenbosch University. The event drew experts together to identify ways to address South Africa's most pressing food and nutrition challenges through a social justice lens.

We hope you find this issue stimulating and useful in continuing the fight for the right to food, nutrition, and health across the globe. We also thank our authors for their insightful contributions.

Paula Knipe
Guest Editor