



USER'S GUIDE TO THE FOOD SECURITY COUNTRY BRIEFS

Note: This note explains the information contained in the Country Briefs in detail. It helps readers better understand the meaning and possible limitations of the indicators provided. The Country Briefs are prepared by the FAO – as requested by the Director General of Europe Aid - in order to support the Food Security Thematic Program of the European Commission. They currently cover thirty of the fifty priority countries which benefit from the "Food Facility" set up in 2009. They are available at:

http://www.foodsec.org/pubs_country.htm

Prices

The FAO's Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) has developed a national basic food price database which monitors and analyses domestic food price trends in developing countries. With few exceptions, price quotations are collected from national official sources. For some countries, information on prices is discontinuous. In these cases, prices cannot be charted. However, when current prices do become available, this will be noted in the text.

Natural Disasters, Drought and Conflicts

Data on refugees and IDPs come from the UNCHR's *Online Population Database*.

"Total outside the country" and "Total in the country" are the sum of different groups of people moving to or from the concerned country. These groups include refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and protected/assisted people by UNHCR.

Data on natural disasters (floods and earthquakes) are collected from the *Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System*. Because it is not easy to localize floods, information is triangulated with other sources. Moreover, given the frequency of earthquakes/floods in some countries, the following rules apply when compiling the tables:

1. Only earthquakes and floods which occurred in the last three months are included. If the number of disasters is more than three, only those with the highest alert scores are displayed.
2. If both earthquakes and floods occurred, at least one of each is displayed.

The alert scores are:

- 1 = less than 100 people killed and less than 80,000 displaced
- 2 = 100 or more people killed or 80,000 or more displaced
- 3 = 1,000 or more people killed or 800,000 or more people displaced

Vegetation Condition

As a starting point, the standard indicator that describes the overall performance of agriculture is the relative difference of NDVI (normalised difference vegetation index), computed for the current month, as compared to the average value of the last 10 years. The following scale was applied:

Absolute difference current year/ 10 year average	Color	Meaning
> +0.125	Green	Very good
> +0.05	Light green	Good
± 0.05	Yellow	Normal conditions
< -0.05	Orange	Poor
< -0.125	Red	Very poor

This indicator has a number of limitations which should be considered:

- It does not account for variations in cultivated areas and for non-climatic factors which may affect the yield (inputs, pests, labour availability, etc).
- It is more suitable to situations where crops are limited by water availability (semi-arid zones or droughts). In regions with high biomass (i.e. mainly equatorial zones) the NDVI is less reliable due to saturation effects and possible noise (clouds and atmospheric effects)
- It doesn't account for seasonal time shifts: For instance, orange may mean "Late start" instead of "Poor" and light green may mean "Early start" instead of "Good"...
- The initial ground resolution of the data (SPOT VEGETATION) is 1 km. It is therefore not crop-specific, but summarises the local state of the vegetation, including naturally occurring land cover.
- The GLOBCOVER map, used to mask out non-agricultural zones describes the entire land-cover and is not limited to agriculture. It may introduce bias or errors in: i) the area indicated in the graph (gross area of the agricultural zone) and therefore the relative importance of the provinces; and ii) in the maps of agriculture zones.

📌 Food Security Situation

This section is based on food security indicators developed by the main international agencies engaged in food security analysis:

FAO's Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) identifies countries facing emergency food crises and in need of external assistance. These countries are classified into three groups based on domestic production and supply conditions.

WFP's Hunger Map classifies all countries of the world into five groups based on the percentage of the population which is undernourished.

IFPRI's Global Hunger Index (GHI) is based on the average of: % of population undernourished, % of underweight in children under five, and % of children dying before the age of five.

FEWSNET covers 14 African, 1 Caribbean (Haiti) and 1 Central Asian (Afghanistan) countries. The "Food Insecurity Severity Scale" uses the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) reference indicators for estimating the level of food insecurity in sub-national areas.

📌 Food Balance Sheet

The chart is based on the FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets. A cereal balance sheet gives a comprehensive picture of a country's cereal supply during a specified reference period. Total supply is calculated from the sum of the total quantity of cereals produced in the country plus the total quantity imported. The sum is adjusted for changes in stocks that may have occurred during the reference period.

📌 Government Policies

Government Policies focus on food and agricultural related policies, including consumer, producer and market oriented measures, trade policy measures and safety net policies. Information from FAO is integrated with that gathered from websites providing specialized news and analysis of developing countries (e.g. ReliefWeb).

Your comments and feedback are welcome and should be addressed to:
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