



Executive Summary

International Workshop “Simple tools for measuring household access to food and dietary diversity”, March 21-23, 2007. Nairobi.

Sponsored by the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division of FAO as part of the EC/FAO Food Security Information For Action Programme, in collaboration with the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Project (FANTA)

Background

The EC/FAO Food Security Information For Action Programme is funded by the European Commission (EC) and implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It aims at enhancing national capacity to generate, manage, and use food and nutrition security information for developing effective policies and programmes that address both short and long-term causes of hunger.

Under the EC/FAO Food Security Information for Action Programme GCP/GLO/EC/162, the Nutrition Division of FAO (AGN) works directly with six countries (Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Somalia, West Bank/Gaza Strip) on adaptation and application of specific tools that bridge food security and nutrition: the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS), and individual and household dietary diversity questionnaires.

The Nutrition Division of FAO collaborates with the FANTA Project and takes part in on-going dialogues with a broader network of food security and nutrition practitioners on issues related to the use of these specific tools, including the World Food Programme and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

AGN organized the international workshop “Simple tools for measuring household access to food and dietary diversity”, which was held in Nairobi from 21-23 March, 2007. The purpose of the workshop was to bring together experts in food security and nutrition from Governments, universities, and international agencies, to discuss the utility of the tools that AGN is promoting and to identify potential areas for their integration into food security information systems at national and decentralized levels. The EC/FAO Programme supported participation by representatives from the six countries collaborating with AGN on the EC/FAO.

The AGN/EC/FAO International workshop March 21-23, 2007

Workshop Objectives

The main workshop objectives were to:

- Generate an increased understanding of innovative and simple methodologies and tools for measuring household access to food and dietary diversity;
- Explore how the tools can be applied and integrated to improve food security information systems;
- Discuss how the tools could be used in decision making for programming and targeting;
- Strengthen collaboration at the national and international levels.

Workshop Outcomes

The workshop had three key outcomes:

- Agreement on the need to achieve standardization of the tools and to engage in further work towards this goal;
- Identification of practical ways of integrating the tools to generate information for policy-making and programming;
- Agreement on the need to establish a users' network to exchange information on practical use of the tools.

Tool Description

Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) is a 9-item scale to measure the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity in developing countries. The scale is adapted from the Household Food Security Survey Module, used since the early 1990s for assessing household food insecurity in the United States. The HFIAS is based on universal situations or experiences households may have when faced with limited access to food: 1) feeling anxiety and uncertainty about the household food supply; and 2) reducing the variety and quantity of food consumed. The nine questions of the HFIAS ask about these universal experiences. The scale is culturally independent, simple to administer and analyze, and represents a human dimension to food (in)security that other food access tools are not able to show.

Respondents are asked “in the past four weeks, did it happen, and if so, how often did it happen that you or any household member”:

- worried that your household would not have enough food?
- were not able to eat the kinds of foods you would have preferred to eat because of lack of resources?
- had to eat a limited variety of foods because of lack of resources?
- had to eat some foods that you really did not want to eat because of lack of resources?
- had to eat fewer meals in a day because there was not enough food?
- had to eat a smaller meal than you felt you needed because there was not enough food?
- had a time when there was no food to eat of any kind in the house, because of lack of resources to get food?
- went to sleep at night hungry because there was not enough food?
- went a whole day and night without eating anything at all because there was not enough food?

Based on positive responses and frequency of occurrence of the nine questions, households are classified by their food security (access) status.

Dietary Diversity questionnaires assess the variety of the diet by summing the number of food groups eaten by household members or individuals in the 24 hours prior to the interview. The assessment includes not only the number of different food groups consumed (variety), but also the types of food groups consumed (quality). The 12 major food groups inquired about are: cereals, tubers, vegetables, fruits, meat, fish, eggs, legumes, milk and milk products, fats and oils, sugar and sweets, beverages. The household dietary diversity (HDD) questionnaire includes food groups in the score that may represent economic ability to obtain, such as sugar and sweets, and beverages including alcoholic drinks. For this reason, it is considered a measure of economic access to a varied diet. The individual dietary diversity (IDD) questionnaire disaggregates food groups to highlight certain food groups rich in micronutrients – in particular, vitamin A rich fruits and vegetables, and iron-rich organ meats. The disaggregated micronutrient rich food groups are counted in the score while sugar and beverages are not; thus the IDD is considered more a measure of the nutritional quality of the diet.

Culturally specific questionnaire adaptation and refinement are needed for both the HFIAS and the dietary diversity questionnaires before applying to a population survey. This includes written translation of the questionnaires into the major languages and qualitative information obtained from key informants and local residents on the appropriate terms for concepts like “household” or “meal”, as well as knowledge on the commonly eaten foods. This latter information is helpful for completing appropriate lists of foods (dietary diversity) and for having ready examples of foods people may need to give up or be forced to eat when unable to access preferred foods (HFIAS). Enumerators need specific training in the objectives of the tools, the precise meaning of the 9 questions of the HFIAS, and in the administration of both tools. This type of questionnaire

refinement and training can easily be incorporated into overall questionnaire development and survey preparation activities that normally precede data collection.

Workshop Summary

The workshop brought together food security and nutrition experts from institutions and organizations in nine countries to discuss a set of simple tools to measure household and individual food consumption characteristics related to access to food, one of the pillars of food security. The tools, the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale and dietary diversity questions at household and individual level, bridge food security and nutrition. They report on food consumption patterns and potential alterations to those patterns when food access is problematic, and which may have deleterious effects on nutritional status. Many of the workshop participants have had experience using these and similar tools, and four countries reported how the HFIAS and dietary diversity questionnaires have been integrated into national or regional surveys (Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Somalia and South Africa).

One major objective of the workshop was to review the tools in a structured manner to identify their strengths and weaknesses and the feasibility of their application in a number of settings. Another objective was to reach a consensus on the need for the tools to be used in a standardized way to ensure comparability across countries and location and over time. The workshop provided the opportunity for ample plenary discussion and group work to explore the usefulness of the tools for obtaining valuable information to inform decision making at national and decentralized levels. Furthermore, the discussion covered challenges that decision makers face when linking the information they receive with decision that must be made for policies, programmes and response. Each country had the opportunity to outline steps they will take to raise the awareness of stakeholders about these tools and to encourage their integration into national information systems.

Overall, there was agreement that the HFIAS and dietary diversity questionnaires could be appropriately used in a number of data collection settings and in food security and nutrition information systems. They were identified as useful in baseline surveys, in early warning for the purpose of assessing trends in food consumption related to food access and in dietary diversity, in measuring impact of policies and interventions and for innovative uses such as community self-monitoring related food security projects and right to food awareness. Many technical issues need further attention in order to better standardize data collection, analysis and interpretation. Many persons expressed interest in participating on a network, to be established by FAO, to share ideas, suggestions for improving the tools and results from surveys and studies where the tools are used. There was a call for a follow up workshop in one year's time to measure progress made by individual countries and international organizations in the use of the tools.

The following schematic highlights the essential points of discussion on the tools over the three day workshop.

Household Food Insecurity Access Scale

- Positive points
 - much interest in this type of measure
 - Simple to administer and analyze
 - Provides information that is currently not available, e.g. human dimension of food security
- Challenges
 - Standardizing how to obtain accurate frequency responses
 - Internal and external validation
 - Creating household food security classifications based on responses
 - The need for standard analysis techniques

Dietary Diversity

- Household : Indicator of economic access to a varied diet
- Individual : Indicator of nutritional quality of the diet
- Not obligatory to use together – choice depends upon the objectives of the study
- Use of standard questionnaires is crucial for integration at the country level and for comparison across locations
- Sharing results will address technical and analysis issues

- Sharing validation results

Adaptation of questionnaires before survey use

- Critical process for implementing the tools
- Adaptation ensures that
 - questions are understandable in the local context
 - respondents interpret the questions and phrases correctly
 - original meaning of the questions is maintained
- dietary diversity questionnaires – important to draw appropriate food lists in each food group
- Careful written translation of prominent language necessary
- Further translation on the spot may be employed where multiple languages are used, therefore thorough training of interviewers key to obtaining accurate data
- Additional costs of adapting and refining the tools are minimum when integrated in established surveys or information systems

Integration

- Tools can be used for various purposes:
 - Programme design and baseline
 - Monitoring changes over time
 - Impact evaluation
 - Early warning
 - Integrated Phase Classification
- For comprehensive food security and nutrition assessments, these tools should not stand alone as they do not identify causes of food insecurity
- Creating awareness with key stakeholders on the usefulness of the tools is a critical first step
- Challenges
 - Capacity to undertake analysis and interpretation
 - Timing of data collection
 - Resources
 - How to differentiate transitory and chronic vulnerability using a mix of indicators

Main key messages

- The tools fill a gap in food security information (food access component and food consumption at household/individual level)
- They are simple and transparent, and can be used at different levels
- They provide a human dimension to food insecurity
- It is essential to increase awareness of key stakeholders to enhance integration
- Capacity building is required for collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination
- Need to report results in most understandable format for decision-makers
- Need to continue working together (FAO to take the lead to create a network for exchange of information)

The workshop agenda and participant list are annexed in this report. A full report of the workshop is currently being drafted and will be widely disseminated.

Annex 1

AGENDA

International Workshop on simple tools for measuring household access to food and dietary diversity

March 21-23, 2007, Panafric Hotel, Nairobi

This workshop is part of an activity of the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division, FAO, Rome, sponsored and supported by the EC/FAO Programme "Food Security Information for Action" Phase II, with additional Support from the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA) Project, Academy for Educational Development, Washington DC.

Background and goals of the workshop

The EC/FAO Food Security Information For Action Programme is funded by the European Commission (EC) and implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It aims at enhancing national capacity to generate, manage, and use food and nutrition security information for developing effective policies and programmes that address both short and long-term causes of hunger.

Under the EC/FAO Programme, the Nutrition Division of FAO works directly with six countries (Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Somalia, West Bank/Gaza Strip) on adaptation and application of specific tools that bridge food security and nutrition: the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS), and individual and household dietary diversity questionnaires. The Nutrition Division of FAO collaborates directly with the FANTA Project and takes part in on-going dialogues with a broader network of food security and nutrition practitioners on issues related to the use of these specific tools, including the World Food Programme and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

The purpose of the workshop is to bring together experts on food security and nutrition from Governments, universities, and international agencies, to discuss the utility of these tools and to identify the potential for their integration into food security information systems at central and decentralized levels.

Workshop Objectives

The main workshop objectives are to:

- Generate an increased understanding of innovative and simple methodologies and tools for measuring household access to food and dietary diversity;
- Explore how the tools could be applied and integrated to improve food security information systems;
- Discuss how the tools could be used in decision making for programming and targeting;
- Strengthen collaboration at the national and international levels.

Workshop Outcomes

The workshop will have three key outcomes:

- Determine how to achieve standardization of the tools and what further work is indicated in this area;
- Identify practical ways of integrating the tools to generate information for policy-making and programming;
- Establish a users' network to exchange information on practical use of the tools.

WEDNESDAY 21 ST MARCH			
Session	Timing	Session Activities	Session Objectives
1 st session: What are the tools and which kind of information do they provide?	08.30 – 09.00	Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the participants to the workshop • Provide an overview on the tools • Share experiences on field testing of the tools
	09.00 – 09.30	Official opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Dr. C. Camarada, FAO representative, Kenya</i> - <i>Ms. R. Ngaruro, Ministry of Health, Kenya</i> 	
	09.30 – 10.00	Participatory exercise: what do you know about household food security tools and what do you expect to learn during this workshop?	
	10.00 – 10.20	Tea/coffee break	
	10.20 – 11.00	Overview of tools that measure household food security and dietary quality - <i>By S. Hendriks, African Centre for Food Security, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa</i>	
	11.00 – 11.10	The FAO project on simple tools for measuring household access to food and dietary diversity – <i>By MC Dop, FAO, Italy</i>	
	11.10 – 11.50	Dietary Diversity – <i>By MC. Dop, FAO, Italy</i> HFIAS – <i>By M. Deitchler, FANTA, USA</i>	
	11.50 – 12.20	Importance of field testing and adaptation of the tools - <i>By A. Mwangi, University of Nairobi, Kenya</i>	
12.20 – 12.45	Plenary discussion		
12.45 – 14.00 Lunch			
2 nd session: In which context do the tools apply?	14.00 – 14.40	Using the tools in a baseline survey of a food security programme - <i>By K. Selvester, ANSA, Mozambique</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the different uses of the tools • Discuss possible applications of the tools by the participants
	14.40 – 15.20	Using the tools in a national agricultural survey - <i>By M. Zoungrana, Ministry of Agriculture, or R. Ouili, Ministry of Health, Burkina Faso</i>	
	15.20 – 15.40	Tea/coffee break	
	15.40 – 16.20	Using the tools in a livelihood survey – <i>By S. Hendriks, African Centre for Food Security, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa</i>	
	16.20 – 17.00	Participatory exercise: how would you suggest using the tools in your own country? (Early Warning, Integrated Phase Classification (IPC), Monitoring surveys, Programme impact evaluations)	

THURSDAY 22ND MARCH			
Session	Timing	Session Activities	Session Objectives
3rd session: What are the decision-makers food security information needs?	08.30 – 08.45	Recap on Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss challenges facing decision makers in using food security information • Determine information needs for decision making
	08.45 – 09.25	Challenges faced by decision makers: need for reliable and timely information on food security and nutrition – <i>J. Owuor, Ministry of Planning and National Development, Kenya</i>	
	09.25 – 10.00	Plenary discussion on information needs for decision making	
	10.00 – 10.20	Tea/coffee break	
4th session: Working groups discussions	10.20 – 11.50	Participants to discuss in five groups (7-8 people per group) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of the tools • Analysis & Information • Household food security assessment • Early warning system and phase classification • Technical issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss in detail practical issues around the tools – purpose, data collection, analysis, different application of the tools
	11.50 – 12.45	Presentation of group work in plenary (each group 10 minutes)	
12.45 – 14.00 Lunch			
5th session: What are the next steps in the individual countries?	14.00 – 15.30	Individual country meetings to define the next steps for integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countries to discuss the tools in relation to their own needs
	15.30 – 15.50	Tea/coffee break	
	15.50 – 16.45	Presentation of next steps by country	
	16.45 – 17.00	Plenary discussion on integration	

FRIDAY 23RD MARCH			
Session	Timing	Session Activities	Session Objectives
6th session: Plenary discussion on the outcomes	08.30 – 08.45	Recap on day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build consensus on the expected workshop outcomes
	08.45 – 09.15	The need for standardized tools: HFIAS and Dietary Diversity	
	09.15 – 09.45	Integration of tools into on-going information systems and in the monitoring and evaluation of food security interventions	
	09.45 – 10.15	A users' network to exchange information on practical use of the tools is established/formulated	
	10.15 – 10.45	Tea/coffee break	
7th session: Results of the workshop and conclusions	10.45 – 11.45	Summary on workshop results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclude the workshop and provide a way forward
	11.45 – 12.30	Official concluding remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>MC Dop, FAO Nutrition Division</i> - <i>T. Tumwet, Min. of Agriculture</i> 	
12.30 Lunch and departure at will			

Annex 2

Participant List

International Workshop on simple tools for measuring
household access to food and dietary diversity,
March 21-23, 2007. Panafric Hotel, Nairobi

Country	Name	Organisation	Email
Burkina Faso	Mahama Zoungrana	Ministry of Agriculture, Direction of Forecasting and Early Warning	mazoung@fasonet.bf
Burkina Faso	Romeo Oouli	Ministry of Health, Direction of Nutrition	ouli_romeo@yahoo.fr
Italy	Marie Claude Dop	FAO HQ, Nutrition Division	marieclaude.dop@fao.org
Italy	Terri Ballard	FAO HQ, Nutrition Division	terri.ballard@fao.org
Italy	Amélie Solal-Céligny	FAO HQ, Nutrition Division	amelie.solalceligny@fao.org
Kenya	Karine Garnier	FAO Regional Office	karine.garnier@fao.org
Kenya	Castro Camarada	FAO - Kenya	castro.camarada@fao.org
Kenya	Muthoni Mwangi	FAO, ALRMP	muthoni.mwangi@fao.org
Kenya	Mary Amuyunzu- Nyamongo	African Insititute for Health and Development (AIFD)	mnyamongo@aihd.org or mnyamongo@yahoo.com
Kenya	Mercy Tero	African Insititute for Health and Development (AIFD)	mercytero@yahoo.com
Kenya	Alice Mwangi	Applied Human Nutrition Programme, University of Nairobi	amwangi@uonbi.ac.ke
Kenya	Gloria Mbera	Applied Human Nutrition Programme, University of Nairobi	mberag@yahoo.com
Kenya	O.L.E. Mbatia	University of Nairobi, Department of Agricultural Economics	profmbatia@yahoo.co.uk
Kenya/Somalia	Grainne Moloney	FAO, FSAU	grainne.moloney@fsau.or.ke
Kenya/Somalia	Ahono Busili	FAO, FSAU	ahono.busili@fsau.or.ke
Kenya/Somalia	Tom Oguta	FAO, FSAU	tom.oguta@fsau.or.ke
Kenya	James Oduor	Arid Lands Project (ALRMP)	j.oduor@aridland.go.ke
Kenya	Bethuel Wafula	Arid Lands Project, Kilifi District	bethwafula@yahoo.com
Kenya	E. W. Osanya	Ministry of Agriculture	eosanya@yahoo.com
Kenya	Teresia Tumwet	Ministry of Agriculture	ttumwet@yahoo.com
Kenya	John Owuor	Ministry of Planning and National Developmnet	jowuor@treasury.go.ke

Kenya	Rosemary Ngaruro	Ministry of Health, Division of Nutrition	rngaruro@nut.co.ke
Kenya	Mary Wachira	Ministry of Health, Division of Nutrition	mawanjo99@yahoo.co.uk
Kenya	Gladys Mugambi	Ministry of Health, Division of Nutrition	gladysmugambi@yahoo.com
Kenya	Paul Nderitu	Central Bureau of Statistics	pmnderitu@cbs.go.ke
Kenya	Nancy Mutunga	FEWS NET	nmutunga@fews.net
Kenya	Jitske VanBinsbergen	FAO, Regional Emergency Office for Africa	jitske.vanbinsbergen@fao.org
Kenya	Ruth Situma	UNICEF-Kenya	rsituma@unicef.org
Kenya	Noreen Prendiville	UNICEF	nprendiville@unicef.org
Kenya	Enock Musinguzi	Biodiversity CGIAR	e.musinguzi@cgiar.org
Kenya	Rachel Cintron	USAID	rcintron@usaid.gov
Malawi	Beatrice Mtimuni	Bunda College of Agriculture	beatricemtimuni@yahoo.com
Malawi	McCallum Sibande	Nutrition, HIV and AIDS Dept., OPC	deptnutaids@globemw.net
Malawi	Veronica N. Kamvazina	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security	agricext@sdpn.org.mw
Malawi	Mr. Hannock M. Kumwenda	Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC), Ministry of Economic Planning and Development	kumwendah@mepd.gov.org
Mozambique	Kerry Selvester	ANSA	skerry@virconn.com
Mozambique	Ms. Claudia Lopes	SETSAN	clolopes2003@yahoo.com.br or clopes@setsan.org.mz
Mozambique	Ms. Hanifa Ibrahim	Ministry of Planning and Development	hanifaibrahimo@dnpo.gov.mz
South Africa	Sheryl Hendriks	KwaZulu Natal University	Hendriks@ukzn.ac.za
South Africa	Margaret Mc Ewan	Sub-Regional FAO TCEO (Johannesburg)	Margaret.mcewan@fao.org
Uganda	Mark Gordon	WFP Regional Bureau	mark.gordon@wfp.org
USA	Megan Deitchler	FANTA Project	mdeitchl@smtp.aed.org
USA	Anne Swindale	FANTA Project	aswindal@smtp.aed.org
USA	Eunying Chung	USAID	echung@usaid.gov
West Bank	Salah Al-Lahham	WFP VAM	Salah.Lahham@wfp.org