6 | RIGHT TO FOOD HANDBOOKS

# Information for monitoring the right to food

LEGISLATION
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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

MONITORING

6 | RIGHT TO FOOD HANDBOOKS

# Information for monitoring the right to food

The content of this handbook is based on FAO's guide *Methods to Monitor the Human Right to Adequate Food* (Volume I and II) written by Maarten Immink, Wenche Barth Eide and Arne Oshaug, with contributions from other members of the International Project on the Right to Food in Development and from FAO's Right to Food Team.

José María Medina Rey and Maria Teresa de Febrer (PROSALUS, Spain) adapted it to the "handbook" format. The translation into English of this handbook was done by Stephen Carlin and Beth Gelb.

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The purpose of the MONITORING handbooks is to provide those responsible for monitoring the right to food with the conceptual, procedural and methodological background to monitor or follow up on right to food policies, programmes and projects from a human rights approach.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Rome, 2014

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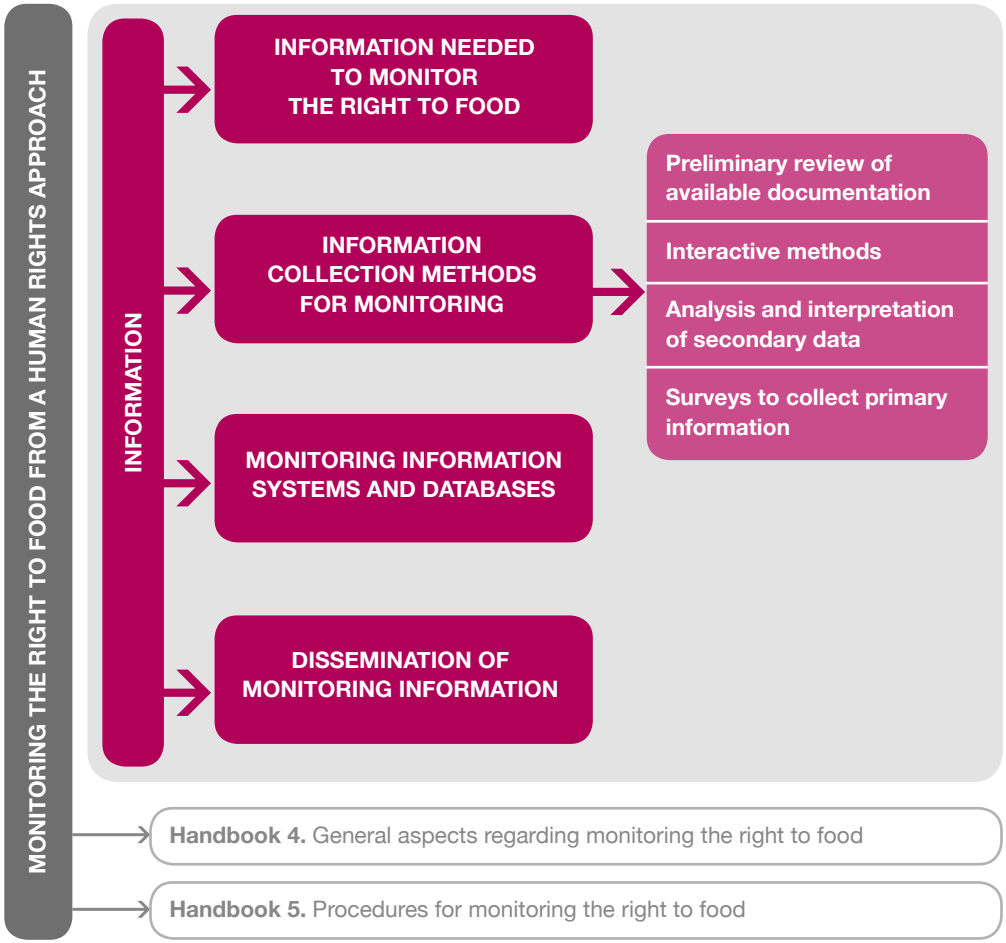


The FAO glossary on the right to food is available at:
http://www.fao.org/righttofood/knowledge-centre/glossary/en

# 1 INFORMATION NEEDED TO MONITOR THE RIGHT TO FOOD

The information gathered from monitoring the right to adequate food should adequately meet the information needs of both rights-holders and those who are responsible for protecting and fulfilling the right to adequate food.

Different users have different information needs. For example, public policy-makers need information to make decisions so that their policies or programmes adequately address the underlying causes of food insecurity affecting the most needy. The legislature needs information to adequately control the executive and to pass laws and regulations (including budget laws) affecting the right to food. Rights-holders or the organizations that represent them and defend their interests need information to determine whether the state is meeting its right to food obligations or whether to insist on a certain aspect of a policy measure because of the lack of state action. Hence, the information needs of different users need to be identified.

To that end, we need to match the areas of responsibility of the different right to food duty-bearers with the different types of information they may need to fulfil their responsibilities and perform well. Access to timely, relevant and valid information should contribute to enhancing the capacity of duty-bearers to fulfil their obligations regarding the right to food, and should likewise aid rights-holders in defending, claiming and enforcing their rights.

Matching the different groups of duty-bearers to the relevant areas and levels of responsibility will make it easier to identify the information most likely needed to monitor those user groups.

## National, regional and community institutions with responsibilities related to the right to adequate food

| LEVELS OF ACTION / TYPES OF RESPONSIBILITIES | NATIONAL | LOCAL / REGIONAL | COMMUNITY |
|---|---|---|---|
| Formulation and monitoring of public policy | - Ministers/ministries concerned<br>- Planners<br>- Technical personnel | - Executive bodies and district/ municipal councils<br>- Technical personnel | |
| Law / Draft legislation | - Legislators<br>- Technical personnel | - District/municipal councils<br>- Technical personnel | |
| Establishment and monitoring of access to judicial remedies | - Human rights institutions/ commissions<br>- Networks of right to food NGOs (Non-governmental Organizations)<br>- Courts<br>- CSOs (civil society organizations) | - NGOs<br>- Courts | |
| Establishment of rules, standards and regulations | - Legislators<br>- Regulatory bodies<br>- Consumer protection agencies<br>- NGOs, CSOs | - District/municipal councils<br>- NGOs, CSOs | |
| Programme development, implementation and monitoring | - Planners<br>- Programme directors<br>- International donors | - Planners<br>- Programme directors | |
| Project formulation, implementation and monitoring | - Competent ministries<br>- International donors<br>- NGOs | - Planners<br>- Programme directors | - Town councils<br>- Community-based organizations |
| Budget and allocation of public resources | - Legislators<br>- NGOs and NGO networks<br>- International donors | - District/municipal councils<br>- NGOs | - Town councils |

| LEVELS OF ACTION / TYPES OF RESPONSIBILITIES | NATIONAL | LOCAL / REGIONAL | COMMUNITY |
|---|---|---|---|
| Provision of public services | - Planners from the competent ministries<br>- Service provision departments at competent ministries, public service entities | - District/municipal planners | - Town councils<br>- Community-based organizations |
| Provision of public information | - Media (press, radio, TV)<br>- NGOs and NGO networks | - Media (press, radio, TV)<br>- NGOs | |
| Political and social mobilization / human rights defence | - Human rights institutions/ commissions<br>- NGOs and NGO networks | NGOs | |
| Production of know-how / capacity building related to the right to adequate food | - Academic institutions<br>- Professional organizations<br>- Training institutions | - Professional organizations<br>- Training institutions | - Community-based organizations |
| Drafting of the international report on progress in rights-based development and the realization of economic, social and cultural rights | - Human rights institutions/ commissions<br>- Ministries<br>- NGOs and NGO networks | | |

Full use should be made of the information available from already existing information systems related to the monitoring of food security, nutrition, poverty reduction, socio-economic development, etc. However, this may still be insufficient in providing the information needed to monitor the different dimensions of the right to adequate food. It is therefore necessary to compare the information required with existing information available from various sources to detect whether there are differences or gaps. This is called information gap analysis and will require an assessment of information systems for the purpose of cross-checking with the demand for information.

As a first step, an inventory of existing information systems on food and nutrition insecurity and vulnerability should be conducted. The description of each system should include its name and a brief description, the information products it generates (name, typical content, frequency) and the agency responsible for managing the system and the information provided.

Based on the inventory, one can proceed by reviewing information system documentation, conducting semi-structured interviews with key informants (from the institutions supplying the information, the agency responsible for the system, users of the information), holding focus group discussions, etc.

An assessment of existing information systems typically covers the following aspects:

- analysis of the degree of complexity in terms of the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of existing information systems likely to produce the information needed for the monitoring framework in question;

- identification of the external and internal factors having an impact on the performance of information systems;

- development of an action plan to strengthen existing information systems and to develop and implement activities to fill the information gaps that occur over time.

- In your job post, what information needs would you have when it comes to monitoring the right to food? What would you use such information for and how often?
- Can these needs be met with the information systems already in place in your country or region? What are the main shortcomings?

# 2 INFORMATION COLLECTION METHODS TO MONITOR THE RIGHT TO FOOD

Several different methods, alone or in combination, can be used to gather information. As a general rule, when two methods are being considered to generate specific information, you should choose the one that most strictly adheres to human rights principles.[1]

Here we present several methods that can be used to collect information to monitor the right to food, classified into four categories: (a) review of existing documents; (b) interactive methods; (c) analysis of secondary data; and (d) primary surveys.

## 2.1. REVIEW OF AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

### Document review

It is very helpful to start the monitoring process with an initial review of available documents: official reports, scientific publications, the so-called "grey literature" (documents published in an informal manner), etc. This review provides a preliminary approach to the wide-ranging issues of food insecurity and vulnerability within a country or region.

In addition to analytical reports based on relevant national surveys, censuses or data inventory, reports based on research studies, programme assessments and policy analysis can also provide very interesting insight when available, as can information

1. Please see Handbooks 4 and 5 of this collection.

relating to the realization of human rights (usually from national human rights bodies) and periodical reports on global United Nations studies.[2]

### Inventories of laws, policies, regulations and directives

Within the scope of document review, a specific look at legal and regulatory documentation is extremely useful in assessing legal, political and institutional frameworks. This can be found, where available, in databases containing inventories of laws, regulations, directives, ordinances, case law abstracts, policy statements, national human rights plans, etc.

## 2.2. INTERACTIVE METHODS

### Brainstorming sessions

*Brainstorming sessions* can be conducted with stakeholders and other individuals with knowledge and/or first-hand experience with specific issues involving right to adequate food monitoring. These issues may include, for example, conditions of food insecurity and vulnerability, identification of groups facing food insecurity and vulnerability, the underlying causes of these situations, and characteristics of their livelihoods.

The people who could participate in these sessions include national and local planners, food and nutrition researchers, technical staff from relevant national and regional sectors (agriculture, health, trade, social welfare, etc.), officials who monitor the poverty rate, NGO and CSO workers who implement food and nutrition security programmes and projects, and possibly human rights institutions.

### Interviews with key informants

*Open or semi-structured interviews with key informants* is a method used to gather new or additional information or to validate the information that the monitor or analyst already has. The purpose of open interviews is to explore people's knowledge and experience about a general topic without the support of a precise and detailed set of questions.

Usually these interviews take the form of a conversation and encourage the informant to supply any unsolicited information that could be relevant. Anyone with knowledge or significant experience in the area in question can be an informant; key informants,

2. Government reports submitted periodically by each country, civil society contributions and other relevant documents are available on the Universal Periodic Review website: http://www.upr-info.org/en/review

i.e. those with greater knowledge or experience on the subject, should be identified beforehand. It may also be important to include people with different points of view to enhance and expand the information that is provided.

### Focus group discussions

*Focus groups* are often used to supplement information. These sessions can be structured, semi-structured or open. Normally the person conducting or facilitating the session has a discussion agenda, i.e. the topics on which information is sought. Focus groups are usually formed by people who have similar characteristics, i.e. similar responsibilities, experience and knowledge. Participation in a focus group discussion is usually by invitation, thus requiring a prior consultation to identify who to invite.

### Direct observation

There are several types of direct observation. The first consists of simple direct observation of community infrastructure or housing conditions, which can be done through the so-called *village tour* with members of the community. This provides additional information about what has been observed.

Direct observation techniques can also be used to obtain information about the provision of public services in the community: how certain services are provided, quality of service, attitudes and actions of the people responsible for providing the service, and the opinion of community members who are service beneficiaries.

### Rapid assessment surveys

Local information can also be obtained through *rapid assessment surveys*. Some of these surveys are participatory (*participatory rural assessments*) which means that they include some of the interactive or direct consultation techniques described above, such as focus group discussions, interviews with key informants and observation techniques.

Rapid assessment methods are particularly appropriate in examinig how policies and local programmes are being implemented. Participatory rural assessment methods are often used for issues related to poverty, food security and natural and agricultural resource management. When applied regularly, the results of these surveys can also serve as a monitoring tool. Since these are applied in specific locations, the results are site-specific and usually cannot be extrapolated to other locations.

### User surveys

*Client satisfaction surveys and participatory service delivery assessments* (PSDA) are a type of survey to measure client satisfaction, and are designed to monitor access to and delivery of public services. These assessments typically cover the following aspects: (i) major constraints faced by people in accessing public services; (ii) quality and appropriateness of services; and (iii) staff capacity and effectiveness in the delivery of services. They specifically target poor and disadvantaged segments of the population. Their key instrument is called the "citizen report card". Survey findings are used to generate recommendations and an action plan to address the constraints faced by the poor in gaining access to public services, and also to improve service delivery management and quality. These assessment surveys can provide information that helps to enhance the capacities of duty-bearers of human rights and enables rights-holders to demand accountability.

## 2.3. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF SECONDARY DATA

In many countries, data from extensive national surveys are available for consultation. Population censuses and agricultural census data are usually quite complete but these are conducted infrequently – every ten years at most. This type of survey uses predesigned forms and in some cases, such as the demographic and health survey conducted in many countries, these are standardized.

**EXAMPLES OF CLOSED SURVEYS USING PREDESIGNED STRUCTURED FORMS**

- Population censuses.
- Agricultural censuses.
- Surveys to measure living standards.
- Demographic and health surveys.
- Multiple indicator cluster surveys.
- Agricultural sampling surveys.
- Health and nutrition surveys.
- Social impact assessment surveys.
- National surveys on household income and expenditure.
- Workforce surveys.

Another source of secondary data could be international data inventories such as the databases of some of the UN agencies and the World Bank.[3] However, their usefulness may be limited as they often do not contain data disaggregated by geographic area or population group, but rather present national averages.

Finally, academic social research can also generate data that can be re-analysed for monitoring purposes. Data will most likely be specific to the areas or population groups in question and not nationally representative. The effective use of secondary data from various sources to monitor progress made in the realization of the right to adequate food depends on whether it is possible: (a) to disaggregate data by vulnerable group or area; (b) to draw up performance indicators from data to monitor progress according to benchmarks and targets; and (c) to provide national or regional estimates based on a representative sampling framework.

## 2.4. PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION THROUGH SURVEYS

Specific surveys to gather primary information should only be used as a last resort when critical information needed for monitoring cannot be obtained from any of the methods described above.

The size of primary surveys can range from *small community surveys to national sample surveys*. The latter are particularly expensive, require a robust sampling framework, take a long time to administer, validate and assess, and require well-trained interviewers with good organizational skills to conduct the survey as well as an efficient system to skilfully manage data and staff.

Where used for monitoring purposes, all or some of the surveys need to be repeated periodically which is usually not very feasible. To mitigate this difficulty, sometimes the content of the survey is broken down into modules, and eventually some of these modules are included in other surveys undertaken on a regular basis so as to minimize both cost and time.

3. Presented below in section 3 of this Handbook.

**SOME ASPECTS TO CONSIDER WHEN CONDUCTING SURVEYS FROM A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE**

- The simplest information collection method(s) should be used when designing the survey, ensuring that only the data actually needed to meet the information needs identified is collected.
- Respondents should be given adequate information before giving their informed consent or declining participation in the survey.
- Language barriers must be taken into consideration to ensure that respondents are properly informed. This means that the field workers administering the survey should be able to speak and understand local languages and dialects.
- Survey findings should be used for the purposes that were originally set.
- The information provided by individuals should be considered strictly confidential and no one's identity should be disclosed in the final results of the survey; only aggregated data should be made public.
- Respondents must have access to the information that they themselves provided, but not the information provided by other respondents.
- The team responsible for the survey should keep respondents permanently updated with detailed information on the survey process, both during the survey itself and after it has been conducted.
- The team responsible for the survey should share the results with the different groups of respondents so that they can understand them and draw their own conclusions. This can also serve to validate results and to learn from different interpretations of the same information.

- Try to compile documents that could be useful for a preliminary review process in preparation for right to food monitoring in your country or region.
- If you were to use interactive methods to launch an information collection process to monitor the right to food in your country or region:
  - Whom would you invite to a brainstorming session to identify the groups of people or families facing food insecurity and vulnerability and their underlying causes?
  - Whom would you consider key informants who should be interviewed?
  - Whom would you like to include in focus group sessions?
- What main sources of secondary data that are important for the monitoring of the right to food can you find in your country or region? What relevant information do they contain?

# 3 INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND DATABASES THAT CAN HELP MONITOR THE RIGHT TO FOOD

## 3.1. INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Information system means a systematic series of activities organized to produce, process, handle, store, analyse, interpret and disseminate data and other information.

The efficiency of information systems refers to the total cost involved in the production of the system's quantitative and qualitative information. Evaluating system efficiency involves comparing alternative approaches and activities that could produce the same information, by defining different ways to combine information input seeking the least expensive combination.

The effectiveness of the information system refers to its impact on the production of knowledge to be absorbed, assimilated and understood by certain groups of stakeholders who then are able to act according to the knowledge acquired. The sustainability of the system indicates the extent to which it can continue generating needed information, particularly when the information system's external or internal factors negatively affect its performance over time.

## 3.2. RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL DATABASES TO MONITOR THE RIGHT TO FOOD

Several international institutions and organizations develop and maintain databases that collect information from different countries that may be related to the right to adequate food and other human rights. The statistics gleaned from these databases are used to prepare the annual reports that some of these organizations produce.

National assessment teams or those responsible for monitoring the right to food can consult some of these international databases for guidance on appropriate indicators that can be developed for national monitoring. Following are some of the major databases.[4]

| NAME | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY |
|---|---|
| **FAOSTAT** | **FAO** |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| This is an online, multilingual database with chronological series of records for more than 210 countries and territories, from 1961 to the most recent year available. The database, which has recently been renovated, allows free access to statistical data on production, trade, food supply, food balance sheets, balance of products, prices, resources (land, irrigation, labour, machinery, fertilizers, pesticides), population, GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions related to agriculture and land use, investment, forestry information. | |
| LINK | |
| http://faostat.fao.org | |

| NAME | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY |
|---|---|
| **NUTRITIONAL PROFILES BY COUNTRY** | **FAO** |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| Concise reviews describing the food and nutrition situation in each country, with basic statistics on food-related factors (including farming) in addition to the selected health, demographic and economic indicators. The profiles follow the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System (FIVIMS) food security and nutrition conceptual framework including immediate, indirect and core causes of malnutrition. | |
| LINK | |
| http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/nutrition/profiles_en.stm | |

4. Although information was updated at the time of writing this Handbook, some of the URLs provided to access these databases may have been changed by the organizations responsible for them.

| NAME | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY |
|---|---|
| **RURAL POVERTY STATISTICS** | **IFAD** |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| This presents different indicators related to rural poverty in each country sorted by thematic areas (social indicators, poverty, health, education, agriculture and food, environment, economic indicators, trade, finance, technology and infrastructure). | |
| LINK | |
| http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org | |

| NAME | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY |
|---|---|
| **GLOBAL DATABASE ON CHILD GROWTH AND MALNUTRITION** | **WHO** |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| This is a standardized collection of data on growth and child malnutrition from anthropometric surveys conducted worldwide since 1960, updated regularly. Anthropometric measurements in children under five include malnutrition (underweight), chronic malnutrition (stunting), acute malnutrition (wasting) and overweight. | |
| LINK | |
| http://www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/en | |

| NAME | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY |
|---|---|
| **INSTITUTE FOR STATISTICS** | **UNESCO** |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| Databases containing statistical data on education, literacy, culture, communications, science and technology. | |
| LINK | |
| http://www.uis.unesco.org | |

| NAME | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY |
|---|---|
| **LABORSTA / ILOSTAT** | **ILO** |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| This database contains data on the labour force, employment, working conditions and labour market (wages, working hours, child labour, social security, union membership), among others. A new updated database, ILOSTAT, is in the beta stage of development and will gradually replace LABORSTA. | |
| LINK | |
| http://laborsta.ilo.org/default.html | |

| NAME | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY |
|---|---|
| **DATABASE FOR MONITORING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS** | **UNITED NATIONS STATISTICS DIVISION** |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| This site contains data, definitions, methodologies and official sources of the over 60 indicators used to measure progress towards achieving the MDGs. The data and analyses are the result of the work performed by the Inter-agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on the MDG indicators. | |
| LINK | |
| http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Home.aspx | |

| NAME | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY |
|---|---|
| **BASE STATISTICS AND INDICATORS ON WOMEN** | **UNITED NATIONS STATISTICS DIVISION** |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| Statistical data on gender, population, education, labour and social development. | |
| LINK | |
| http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/indwm/default.htm | |

| NAME | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY |
|---|---|
| **DATABASE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT** | **WORLD BANK** |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| This offers diverse data on agriculture and rural development, including arable land, farmland, jobs in agriculture, use of fertilizers and machinery, grain yields, etc. | |
| LINK | |
| http://data.worldbank.org/topic/1 | |

| NAME | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY |
|---|---|
| **HEALTHSTATS** | **WORLD BANK** |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| Website with information on health, nutrition and population where you can explore, view and download data for over 250 indicators from more than 200 countries, covering issues such as financing of health, HIV/AIDS, immunization, malaria and tuberculosis, health workers and sanitary facilities, nutrition, reproductive health, population estimates and projections, cause of death, non-communicable diseases, and water and sanitation. | |
| LINK | |
| http://datatopics.worldbank.org/hnp | |

| NAME | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY |
|---|---|
| **DATABASES BY DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS** | **WORLD BANK** |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| Presents series of chronologically ordered data on different indicators sorted by theme (agriculture and rural development, climate change, science and technology, social development, urban development, education, aid effectiveness, energy and mining, gender, infrastructure, environment, poverty , economic policy and debt, health, financial sector, private sector, public sector, labour and social protection). | |
| LINK | |
| http://data.worldbank.org/indicator | |

| NAME | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY |
|---|---|
| **STATISTICS BY COUNTRY CONCERNING VARIOUS POVERTY REDUCTION INDICATORS** | **SOCIAL WATCH** |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| Social Watch is an international network of citizens' organizations working to eradicate poverty and its causes, to end all forms of discrimination and racism, to ensure an equitable distribution of wealth and to raise human rights awareness. It posts statistics by country concerning different poverty reduction indicators and a gender equality index by country and region. | |
| LINK | |
| http://www.socialwatch.org/node/13440 | |

| NAME | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY |
|---|---|
| **CORRUPTION DATABASE BY COUNTRY** | **TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL** |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| This database provides information organized by country on tools to measure corruption and transparency and also features governance and development indicators. It is developed and maintained by Transparency International, an independent organization established in 1993 and operating in over 100 countries. | |
| LINK | |
| http://www.transparency.org/country | |

| NAME | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY |
|---|---|
| **HUNGER AND NUTRITION COMMITMENT INDEX** | **IDS – UKAID - IRISHAID** |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| This index measures the commitment of governments in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. On the website of this initiative, developed by the Institute of Development Studies and supported by Irish Aid and UKAid, you can find the reports and data that were used for the index. | |
| LINK | |
| http://www.hancindex.org | |

| NAME | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY |
|---|---|
| **STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES** | **UNITED NATIONS** |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| This database, which is updated regularly by the United Nations, shows the status of the various human rights treaties, specifying which countries have signed and ratified them. | |
| LINK | |
| http://treaties.un.org/Pages/Treaties.aspx?id=4&subid=A&lang=en | |

| NAME | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY |
|---|---|
| **UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR)** | **UPR INFO** |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| This multilingual website maintained by the NGO UPR Info (with special consultative status with ECOSOC) features wide-ranging information organized by country with all the UPR documents available, including: state reports, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) compilations and summaries, NGO contributions, working group reports and a database of recommendations (with a search engine). It also offers webcasts of UPR sessions, videos, tutorials and detailed explanations on how to participate in the process. | |
| LINK | |
| http://www.upr-info.org/en | |

## 3.3. RELEVANT PERIODIC INTERNATIONAL REPORTS TO MONITOR THE RIGHT TO FOOD

International and civil society organizations produce and disseminate periodic reports related to poverty reduction, development, agriculture, food, nutrition, the right to food, health, etc. Some of these reports can be used as secondary sources of information which are useful for right to food monitoring.

| PERIODIC REPORTS WHICH COULD BE USEFUL IN MONITORING THE RIGHT TO FOOD | | |
|---|---|---|
| TITLE | RESPONSIBLE PARTY | LINK |
| The State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI) | FAO | http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/en |
| The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) | FAO | http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/en |
| Annual world health report | WHO | http://www.who.int/whr/en/index.html |
| Human Development Report | UNDP | http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hdr |
| Annual report on children | UNICEF | http://www.unicef.org/publications/index.html |
| World Development Report | World Bank | http://publications.worldbank.org |
| Social Watch annual report | Social Watch | http://www.socialwatch.org/annualReport |
| The Right to Food and Nutrition Watch | CSO Consortium | http://www.rtfn-watch.org/en/home |

WORKING GUIDELINES

- In your country or region is there a functioning information system that can provide useful information to monitor the right to food? Who does it answer to? Is the information produced publicly available? What are the main limitations or shortcomings?
- Search for relevant information about your country in the international databases and periodical reports listed in this Handbook. Which of these databases and reports do you feel are most interesting or useful? Why?

# 4 DISSEMINATION OF MONITORING INFORMATION

Information sharing is an important step in the monitoring process. Monitoring requires resources and its usefulness depends on the use made of how the information it generates is used, and whether it is used to take better decisions and engage in actions giving rise to real and positive change. That is why it is important for those responsible for monitoring to be familiar with the information needs of decision-makers, planners and other stakeholders so as to be able to provide them with valid and timely information.

Information can be shared in many different ways depending on who will use the information produced. A rights-based monitoring approach requires that information be accessible and understandable to everyone, including rights-holders. Therefore, the way information is furnished is just as important as the monitoring results themselves, and dissemination techniques must therefore be adapted to the needs and capabilities of each user group. The key issues are to make sure that they are readily accessible, interpreted, understood, and can be used by those for whom they are intended. Some result reporting tools, such as maps, are especially interesting insofar as they facilitate visualization and understanding.

### MAPS AS INFORMATION REPORTING INSTRUMENTS IN MONITORING THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD

Maps can tell an important and dynamic story in very few words because they can show the geographical distribution of wealth, the incidence of poverty, access to infrastructures and basic services, and focus attention on spatial inequality. The Right to Food Guidelines specifically mention mapping as an appropriate technique to monitor and report on progress in realizing the right to adequate food.

Maps can be used to pinpoint areas where food insecurity and vulnerability are prevalent, and to identify the livelihood and specific characteristics of the people living in each location that has been geographically identified as vulnerable.

Maps have certain advantages as monitoring instruments:

- Generally speaking, it is easy to understand and interpret the messages contained in maps.
- Time and space can be combined in a map to express changes over time in specific areas.
- Maps can be used to highlight specific components of the right to adequate food.
- There is evidence to show that maps have a real impact on countries' policy development and the setting of priorities and on the geographical objectives of national programmes, public budget decisions, etc.
- Map stratification (the two-dimensional overlay of different maps of the same geographic area) helps to identify and better understand the underlying causes of food insecurity and vulnerability in a specific location.

The main limitation comes from the need for geographic information systems (GIS), i.e. geo-referenced databases enabling the integration of different types of data sets (income levels, health and nutrition, environmental conditions, etc.) linked to a precise geographic reference. However, today's computer hardware and software is making the presentation of information through maps increasingly accessible.[5]

## INFORM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF PROGRESS MADE IN THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD

All ICESCR signatory countries are obliged to share right to adequate food monitoring information with other countries. One of the sharing mechanisms is the CESCR's periodic reports. This chapter shows how the different assessment and monitoring methods discussed in this volume can be applied to the preparation of specific sections of these reports.

5. For concrete examples of maps, please see FAO. 2009. *Methods to Monitor the Human Right to Adequate Food*. Volume II, annex 5. Rome.

An important feature of the international system for the promotion and protection of human rights is institutionalized by monitoring the compliance of States Parties to international conventions with international human rights law. Special committees composed of independent experts appointed by the United Nations are in place to oversee the degree of compliance by the states that have ratified the relevant conventions. Regarding the right to adequate food, the relevant convention is the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the committee in question is the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). Ratifying states are obliged to submit reports every five years on the measures taken and progress achieved in the implementation of the rights recognized under the covenant.

The role of civil society is vital, and therefore Non-governmental Organizations active on issues related to economic, social and cultural rights are invited to participate in the reporting process by submitting oral and written reports over and above the government report.

General guidelines with specific sections for each of the ICESCR's rights have been drawn up to assist countries in preparing their reports to the CESCR.

**GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE RIGHT TO FOOD SECTION OF THE REPORTS TO THE CESCR**

- Overview of the extent to which the right to food has been realized in the country (specify sources of information).
- Detailed information on the situation of hunger and malnutrition in the country, including:
  - situation of particularly vulnerable groups (landless and marginalized, rural workers, rural and urban unemployed, indigenous, children, elderly, etc.);
  - significant gender differences within the above groups;
  - changes in the last five years in the status of the above groups.
- Description of changes in national laws, policies and practices affecting access to food of these groups, and the impact of these changes.
- Measures identified by the government to ensure the right to food of each of the above groups, as well as those actually adopted, their specific aims, and benchmarks against which to measure progress.
- Measures taken to improve food production, conservation and distribution methods, their contribution to the realization of the right to food and their impact in terms of the ecological sustainability of productive resources.
- Land reform measures taken by the government to ensure that the agricultural system has been effectively used to promote food security at the household level.
- Measures taken by the government to ensure equitable distribution of food supplies worldwide.

Periodic reports depend on existing and newly generated information, hence the value of the international reporting requirement for each country's monitoring process.[6]

6. Government reports submitted periodically by each country and the contributions of civil society and other relevant documents are available on the Universal Periodic Review website: http://www.upr-info.org/en/review

- Is a monitoring process on the right to food or some related subject such as food security or nutrition under way in your country or region? If so, how is the information generated by that monitoring process being disseminated? Is this dissemination process appropriate from a human rights perspective?
- Check the relevant documents of the last Universal Periodic Review conducted in your country and search for the information regarding the human right to food. What do you think are the most salient aspects from the perspective of the progressive realization of this right?

This collection of RIGHT TO FOOD HANDBOOKS has been compiled from publications forming part of the Right to Food Methodological Toolbox prepared by FAO's Right to Food Team.

The RIGHT TO FOOD HANDBOOKS have been developed under the project entitled "Coherent Food Security Responses: Incorporating Right to Food into Global and Regional Food Security Initiatives", co-funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID).

For more information on the Right to Food Methodological Toolbox, visit the website: **www.fao.org/righttofood** or contact us at: **righttofood@fao.org**

## RIGHT TO FOOD HANDBOOKS

1. The right to food within the international framework of human rights and country constitutions
2. Development of specific right to food legislation
3. Review of the compatibility of sectoral laws with the right to food
4. General aspects regarding monitoring the right to food
5. Procedures for monitoring the right to food
6. Information for monitoring the right to food
7. Assessment of the right to food
8. Advocacy on the right to food based on the analysis of government budgets
9. Who's who in the right to food
10. Right to food training

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