COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY
Thirthy-seventh Session
Rome, 17-22 October 2011
MAPPING FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION ACTIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL

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Matters to be brought to the attention of CFS:

Considering the update on the progress made since the 36th session, and further supported by the country case studies in developing and implementing methods and tools for mapping food security and nutrition (FSN) actions at country level the Committee is invited to:

- Endorse the recommendations contained in section IV of this document related to the development and implementation of country level mapping of FSN actions

- Request the Secretariat to continue facilitating the process of developing and implementing country level mapping of FSN, and to provide an update at the 38th session of CFS in 2012

- Encourage interested stakeholders and relevant sectors to participate in assisting countries with the development and implementation of mapping FSN actions, form appropriate multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder partnerships and encourage harmonization of methods

- Recommend that additional national governments be invited to present at CFS 38 in 2012 to share the results of mapping food security and nutrition actions to inform other national governments, to exchange experiences between countries and international actors and to obtain their support for the country level mapping process

- Recommend that adequate resources are made available to fund follow-up activities to provide interested countries with technical support for the development and implementation of FSN mapping systems as part of their national development monitoring efforts.

I.   OVERVIEW SINCE THE 36TH SESSION OF CFS

1.   The report to the 36th Session of the Committee on World Food Security, entitled Mapping Food Security Actions at Country Level (CFS:2010/3), explained why tools to map food security and nutrition actions are needed and what is meant by mapping food security actions. The report went on to discuss briefly who may be the users of such mapping tools and for what purposes they may be applied. In-country institutional arrangements that may be needed to use mapping tools were outlined, and the report provided a brief overview of one mapping tool under development at FAO, indicating that there are others out there as well.

2.   In this context food security and nutrition mapping means profiling actions (policies, programmes, strategies, plans and projects) that support food security and nutrition objectives, and charting the linkages of these actions to domestic and donor resource flows, implementing institutions and beneficiary population groups. Mapping approaches, methods and tools are needed to improve the capacity of governments and others to make well-informed decisions about how best to design and implement food security and nutrition actions and allocate resources to achieve food security and nutrition objectives. Primary users of the mapping information at national level would be national governments, in addition to non-governmental and private sector organisations, multi-stakeholder bodies, and bi- and multi-lateral development partners. Users at international level would include formally constituted intergovernmental bodies, such as CFS, multi-lateral and civil society organisations promoting efforts to reduce hunger and malnutrition.

3.   The Committee endorsed a general process to further develop and implement a mapping tool for in-country use. The guiding principles for this process include that it should be country-driven, build on existing in-country institutional structures and add value to existing national food security and nutrition information for decision making. It was foreseen that support from the global level would focus on refining the design concepts and on proposing institutional arrangements necessary to implement food security and nutrition action mapping. Technical support would be provided to interested countries with the development and implementation of the mapping tool, possibly facilitated by the CFS Secretariat, guided by the CFS Bureau and Advisory Group, and in partnership with global and national organisations and agencies.

4.   A stepwise approach was proposed for the development of the mapping tool that involves learning from existing tools and methods, and on-going country experiences, and combining this information to prepare an integrated proposal that may be considered by CFS. The activities that were envisaged to implement the process are:
   a)   A review of existing mapping tools and of national information systems to draw lessons relevant to mapping food security and nutrition actions and identify information gaps
   b)   Close examination of mapping tools under development
   c)   A technical consultative workshop to consider and discuss all the experiences, findings and information obtained through the previous two activities.

This report is based on the key findings and recommendations obtained through the review and technical consultative workshop.

II.   OVERVIEW OF THE REVIEW OF FSN ACTIONS MAPPING TOOLS/SYSTEMS

5.   The primary purpose of the review was to provide technical inputs for the subsequent workshop and to learn from different national experiences in FSN-related actions mapping and generate lessons learned and best practices from global and regional experiences. Existing FSN action mapping tools and systems were identified, as well as other ongoing mapping activities and experiences from global, regional and national perspectives. Existing and relevant systems were identified to understand who is doing what, and what the key issues are in developing and implementing a system to map FSN actions. The scope of the review was intentionally broad to learn from a variety of stakeholders at different levels[1]. The findings from the review are as follows.

A.   COUNTRY LEVEL FSN-RELATED ACTION MAPPING SYSTEMS AND ACTIVITIES

6.   One of the key findings of this review was the scarcity of comprehensive, routine systems to map FSN actions at the national level. This is partly because:
   a)   Actions mapping as a standard procedure is a fairly new concept within the FSN community
   b)   Stakeholders have not yet developed a common understanding about what constitutes FSN actions mapping

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[1] Further details can be found in the full Review report (available in English only), web link:

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs1011/Mapping/CFS_Food_Security_and_Nutrition_Actions_Mapping_Review_Final.pdf. See Table 2 of Appendix A of the report for a listing of the FSN action mapping or similar activities by country. The listing includes: coordination tools, such as OCHA's 3w's (who-what-where) used primarily for humanitarian response situations; aid management systems, which help track and manage financial commitments, disbursements, gap-analysis used to identify programme targeting errors, projects and activity mapping that plot interventions on a map for project management or coordination purposes, global aid-flow tracking for research purposes, and thematic-mapping of projects for general public interest.

c) Similar mapping exercises are rarely comprehensive, systematic or conducted routinely to be useful for the development of an FSN strategy or action plan. This includes activities such as comparing interventions to needs, identifying who is doing what and where, matching donor funding to investment plans, establishing spatial or thematic intervention gaps and overlap, etc. Further, there are no generally agreed-upon methods or protocols to guide the actions mapping process.

7. FSN-specific activities or exercises are often difficult to identify and classify for two main reasons. Firstly, there are many different types of national activities which might be related to FSN. These might take place in a related sector (agriculture, health, nutrition, poverty reduction, without embracing FSN in a comprehensive manner. Secondly, food security or nutrition objectives can be part of broader government national plans on poverty reduction or social welfare. Or FSN may not be fully mainstreamed as a cross-cutting issue, nor uniquely identified as a priority in national strategies and policies. This makes identifying specific FSN actions mapping activities or exercises difficult. Nevertheless, there are important lessons to be learned from countries that have conducted similar exercises for the purpose of formulating FSN-related national policies, strategies or action plans. These experiences can yield insights into how such systems are implemented and managed, as well as into potential sources of data and information.

B. MOVING TOWARDS ACTIONS MAPPING SYSTEMS

8. Most countries that are conducting FSN actions mapping are doing so as a one-off exercise. Perceptions of FSN from the national and global levels, as well as the great variety of contexts which are found in different countries, must be considered to better understand the requirements of FSN actions mapping systems. In some countries, food security is primarily understood as being in the domain of the agricultural sector, while nutrition in the health sector, overlooking the multi-sector dimension of FSN. In other countries food security and nutrition are more closely linked in a cross-sectoral collaborative effort including different stakeholders. Also, different FSN-related structures, information, systems, and capacities exist in different countries. This makes it difficult to establish a singular approach that is responsive to multiple needs.

9. The review also gathered comments from users regarding the potential benefits of a more dynamic, comprehensive and systematic approach. Benefits that were identified included:
- A regular update of what interventions exist, what is planned, and for what purposes
- A method to match potential interventions to national priorities
- Improved government ownership and management
- More dynamic action plans with less of an academic focus

More transparent and accessible planning process for government and stakeholders.

C. COMPONENTS OF ACTION MAPPING SYSTEMS

10. One of the purposes of the review was to highlight key issues from existing systems and set the stage for the workshop discussions to better understand how to establish, as a standard and routine practice, an in-country action mapping system. Therefore, it is useful to identify and explore what might be some of the components of such a system. An initial set of components and issues is identified below.

11. Institutions and Governance - Institutional ownership, good governance, and collaboration are key components to enable FSN actions mapping at national level. The cross-cutting nature of FSN implies that multiple partners would/should be involved to ensure that different sectors are represented. Furthermore, other government ministries can be involved for thematic and operational purposes. For example, national plans of action are often maintained by ministries of planning, even when they relate to FSN. Other relevant key issues here that need to be considered include:

a) Who defines, owns, and manages the system
b) What the role is of different institutions and of individuals within participating institutions
c) How existing FSN coordination mechanisms are to be involved.

12. Analytical Framework and Outputs - Comparing different information layers to better understand FSN-related funding gaps, prioritization, thematic overlaps, and other concerns, lies at the core of action mapping. Establishing a broad analytical framework can help guide the action mapping process, as well as help define specific questions of decision makers.. This key component involves issues such as:
a) Who defines, owns, manages, and runs the analytical process
b) What analytical guidelines, methods, processes, tools are involved
c) What outputs are expected from the system (charts, tables, maps, reports, other)
d) What inputs are required to produce the information outputs
e) How are outputs shared and improved
f) How are outputs linked to the information needs.

13. **Users and Usage** - The principal users of FSN action mapping outputs are government decision makers involved in designing, amending, or monitoring FSN-related policies, strategies, and plans of action. Other users include national FSN stakeholders (UN, NGO's, institutes, private and public sector, others). Eventually, information outputs from national FSN actions mapping can feed regional and global levels. Additional usage of FSN mapping information may go beyond the principal objective of informing the development, enhancement, or alignment of policies, strategies, and national plans of action. Other relevant issues here include the identification of principal and secondary users at national, regional and global levels, the full set of uses of FSN action mapping information, and how users can express their information needs for the system to respond to.

14. Data and Information Management - Data and information from a variety of sources are the building blocks of analysis. These information layers come from different sources and are brought together for a comparative or integrated analysis. The analytical information outputs need to be:
a) Comprehensive
b) Relevant
c) Accurate
d) Frequent
e) Timely (also known as CRAFT).

Complementary important issues relate to the identification of required core information layers, required FSN coding classifications and indicators, and available IT hardware and analytical and networking software.

15. **Operational, Resource, and Contextual Requirements** - A key dimension is to put the system in operation within existing government structures. For actions mapping to become a routine activity, appropriate resources to maintain or enhance capacities and infrastructure, are required. Capacity and technology are fundamental to the system. As with any system, it should be enabled to function and expand as usage and demand increases. Other important issues refer to the key operational elements needed to start-up and maintain the system, the type of resources needed, and identification of enabling and obstructing factors for the development of the system. Sustainability of the system is a key issue.

D. WAY FORWARD TOWARDS MAPPING FSN ACTIONS

16. The components and issues identified above are relevant regardless of the approach to mapping national FSN actions. Different approaches will be appropriate depending on specific contexts, available infrastructures, relevant resource constraints, or competing government and

stakeholder interests. But in general, the implementation or creation of action mapping systems may be facilitated by taking the following key considerations into account:

  a) The system should be government owned and managed with multi-stakeholder and multi-agency participation,
  b) Apply existing key FSN information layers as well as standard analytical methods,
  c) Enable the dynamic alignment of new FSN interventions and frequent updates,
  d) Put in place well-documented standard operating procedures and define roles and responsibilities,
  e) Make good use of technologies to automate, standardise, and simplify information management,
  f) Build national systems with strong linkages to regional and global systems. Where necessary, national capacities should be improved, and special efforts should be made to obtain political commitment and ownership by creating a solid understanding of the mapping process and its products.

III.   OVERVIEW OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE TECHNICAL CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP

17.   The overall objective of the workshop was to improve collective understanding of what constitutes food security and nutrition action mapping systems, to what purposes the information generated by such systems may be put, and what is generally required to implement effective systems that correspond to those purposes. Thus the workshop was designed to:

  a) Clarify the key issues related to opportunities, constraints, key components and approaches for FSN action mapping based on country experiences and other initiatives from global partners
  b) Learn lessons from country experiences and initiatives and from global partners, to illustrate different approaches to FSN action mapping
  c) Identify the building blocks for FSN action mapping including components and approaches.
  d) Formulate recommendations for CFS regarding FSN action mapping.

18.   The outputs of the technical consultative workshop include:

  a) Key issues identified and clarified for FSN action mapping, including opportunities and constraints
  b) Country experiences explored and documented
  c) Lessons learned from country experiences, initiatives from global partners, and subsequent discussions on dimensions and approaches to FSN action mapping
  d) Building blocks identified for good practices in FSN action mapping
  e) Content provided for recommendations by the workshop participants towards FSN action mapping in response to request by CFS.

19.   The workshop was held in Rome and applied a participatory and inter-active approach. Thirty-six people with knowledge and experience of the technical and institutional issues related to implementation of relevant country level information systems were invited to participate in the workshop. Invitees represented 14 different countries and included stakeholders and experts representing Governments, CSO/NGOs, public and private technical organizations, and UN and development agencies[2]. Workshop participants made brief presentations on their experiences with different information systems that can be used and/or adapted to map food security and nutrition

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[2] For a full list of participants as well as a description of the workshop organization, agenda and methods, please refer to the Workshop Report , web link:
http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs1011/Mapping/CFS_Mapping_workshop_report_final_25June2011.pdf (English only)

actions. The country presentations also included the currently ongoing development work by FAO in Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Nigeria of the MAfFS system – Mapping Actions for Food Security. The group discussions were structured around the following five themes:

   i.   Institutions and governance
  ii.   Analytical frameworks and outputs
 iii.   Data and information management
  iv.   Mapping information usage and users
   v.   Operations, needed resources and contextual requirements.

A.   CONCLUSIONS AND GOOD PRACTICES DRAWN FROM MULTIPLE COUNTRY EXPERIENCES

20.   The workshop revealed that there was great interest in the subject of FSN action mapping on the part of the participants. Discussions and presentations during the workshop focused on experiences with existing mechanisms to profile actions such as policies and programmes and linking these with resource flows, funding and implementing institutions, benefiting locations and populations, and other relevant variables[3]. The country-level experiences that were shared and the subsequent discussions point to a significant potential for such systems to enhance co-ordination among development partners and improve efficiency and effectiveness in the management of the FSN agenda and in resource allocations to achieve FSN objectives and targets.

21.   The participants stressed that the way forward is closely related to the ability to establish appropriate linkages between the various existing initiatives as well as across the various sectors that have an impact or are of relevance to food security and nutrition. These include mapping initiatives that cover national and/or international flows of resources from various partners (e.g. government, civil society organizations, international donors, IFIs, private sector); systems in support of development or emergency actions; and, those related to specific thematic areas and/or sectors.

22.   Networking and effective communication are essential means towards achieving compatibility between relevant information systems. It was clear from the discussions that the need for the various actors to use a common language is paramount, when it comes to a common understanding of what constitutes food security and nutrition actions.

23.   It was also clear from the discussions that there are not many fully operational systems at the national level that specifically "map food security and nutrition actions". However, there are systems in place that 'map', in a broad sense, different aspects. FAO's MAfFS system, specifically designed to map FSN actions, showed good developmental progress. Potentially it may be a good and appropriate tool to map FSN actions at national level. While some other systems do have certain methods/tools in place to examine and analyze who is doing what and where, the main mechanism used is not necessarily a database that eventually links various aspects together. It is therefore useful to make a clear distinction between organizational and institutional systems and those more focused on information, coding structures and database management.

24.   The workshop discussions covered various components but perhaps the ones that most strongly resonated among participants were on:

   i.   Institutions and governance
  ii.   Data and information management
 iii.   Operational capacities and resource requirements.

Following in-depth discussion of requirements for all components, drawn from national, regional and international level the following recommendations were made.

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[3] Please refer to the Workshop report for a complete listing of the country presentations made at the workshop.

25.   ***Institutions and Governance*** - Ensuring involvement of multiple stakeholders in FSN as a multi-sectoral discipline and thus their involvement in FSN action mapping requires at national level:

   a)   Excellent facilitation of the process and communication towards building political and institutional commitment for FSN action mapping

   b)   Strong linkages to the decision-making process for effective FSN action mapping, starting with linking the various actions to resources, thus involving the custodians of the national budget (Planning/Finance) and Ministries with the necessary mandate and capacity to coordinate multi-sectoral issues (such as the Prime Minister's Office or the Office of the President).

26.   National task teams need to be established or strengthened to engage in advocacy for FSN action mapping, and to demonstrate the use of mapping in policy decision-making and action-planning. This same team could assist in including FSN action mapping when drawing up FSN action plans, help ensure coherence in the process and establish linkages to available resources. Countries are urged to build on existing institutional structures, rather than creating new ones, to prevent duplication of efforts and make better use of scarce resources.

27.   ***Data and Information Management -*** It was realised that FSN action mapping is part of a larger mapping exercise across all sectors within national boundaries but includes important stakeholders **at sub-national, national, regional and global levels** and therefore:

   a)   At the start of FSN action mapping processes, reviews of existing work from OECD, UN, Gates Foundation, Aid Data, Aid Info, national programs, etc. need to be considered, with a clear aim of working towards a common language (agreement on coding standards of basic information) and compatibility among all relevant information systems

   b)   Inventories of data systems need to be conducted – their definitions, variables, code lists covering both qualitative as well as quantitative sources, especially regarding FSN variables/indicators. This would help in developing sample templates that could eventually be used by all stakeholders for programmes and projects, etc. with harmonized coding of key variables that highlight or record FSN actions

   c)   Global partners should facilitate and coordinate these data and information harmonization efforts with the main ownership of the process clearly at national level, supported by significant efforts towards strengthening relevant country capacities

   d)   Working groups would facilitate the communication and exchange between stakeholders – in particular through the development of a web portal for easy access to existing or as yet to be registered codes to map FSN actions.

28.   ***Operational Context – Capacity, Resources and Users -*** As the various building blocks for FSN action mapping often already exist at **national level**, one important step is the need for high-level (political) support to gain access to the various data sources and allow the mapping to take place.

29.   In order to be successful, capacity development is essential – at organizational and individual levels and in both technical and non-technical areas. Especially as the process is closely linked with government operations at the sub-national levels, as part of the drive towards decentralisation, capacity development at sub-national levels is important. Investment in capacity development is key to ensuring that FSN action mapping becomes part of routine functions of existing systems, thus strengthening the roles of the different stakeholders.
A communication strategy to raise awareness among potential users of FSN action mapping information, especially decision-makers, of the opportunities for FSN action mapping would also be a useful and necessary tool.

IV.   RECOMMENDATIONS

30.   The following recommendations are provided for consideration by CFS. They were generated during the consultative workshop after due deliberation of the evidence of the review study and the presentations and discussions at the workshop. These recommendations are addressed to the CFS, Member States, international and regional development partners, the CFS Secretariat and the FSN Action Mapping Task Team.

A.   PROVIDING TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO INTERESTED COUNTRIES

31.   **Regional bodies** are encouraged to support the use of FSN action mapping at country level and include mapping of actions in their regional FSN action plans.

32.   **CFS** be requested to support the promotion of FSN action mapping among its member states, and facilitate efforts to exchange experiences between the countries and regions in the world.

33.   **Focal Points at global, regional and national levels** be identified to facilitate the process and provide technical assistance to the regions and countries.

34.   The **FSN Action Mapping Task Team** continue to play an important role in coordinating and facilitating technical assistance to national and regional institutions working on FSN actions mapping.

35.   **CFS** be requested to organize follow-up meeting(s) to track the progress of implementation of food security and nutrition actions mapping in various country contexts, with the results to be shared at CFS 38 in 2012.

B.   DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS FOR FSN ACTION MAPPING

36.   **FAO**, given its mandate and experience in this field, should lead the harmonization of the various data efforts, in collaboration with other UN agencies to develop a common understanding of what constitutes food security and nutrition actions, and strive towards compatibility of different information systems.

C.   OPERATIONS, RESOURCES AND CONTEXTUAL REQUIREMENTS

37.   **International and regional development partners** strengthen ongoing efforts and build up an online community of practice where experiences can easily be shared among member states. Such an online resource could help member states interested in starting such activities, in particular in describing the process of how to get started. This includes activities such as taking stock of relevant initiatives and stakeholders, defining roles and responsibilities, resource requirements and selection of the right approaches, methods, processes, protocols and outputs.

38.   **International and regional development partners** be requested to provide technical assistance to member states where possible, aligned fully with the national context and priorities of each country.

39.   **Member States** be encouraged to allocate sufficient resources to enable FSN action mapping be included as part of their national development monitoring efforts.

40.   **Member States** be encouraged to establish and strengthen partnerships for FSN action mapping between governmental institutions and civil society such as farmers' associations, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, etc.

41.   **Member States** be encouraged to monitor the process of implementing FSN action mapping as a way of learning-by-doing.