



# COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

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## 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 37<sup>th</sup> Session, including the outcomes of the discussions held during FAO Regional Conferences and the main findings and recommendations of the Technical Workshop on Harmonization of Food Security and Nutrition Actions Mapping, the Committee:

- 1) Notes the importance of food security and nutrition actions mapping and related capacity needs at country level;
- 2) Endorses the recommendations contained in paragraph 17 of this document related to the identification of ways to improve the harmonization of methods and tools and the streamlining of food security and nutrition actions mapping with other food security and nutrition information systems;
- 3) Encourages the development of a time bound workplan with clear outputs and resource requirements to:
  - a) develop and reach agreement on a set of common variables, standards, and data exchange protocols for FSN actions mapping;
  - b) promote their application through those organizations already engaged in actions mapping;
  - c) continue strengthening collaboration on and harmonization of FSN actions mapping across sectors and actions mapping systems operated by partners at all levels (global, regional, national, local);
- 4) Encourages the Rome based agencies, in collaboration with key partners and an expanded Task Team, as appropriate, to assist in the development and implementation of the above mentioned work plan based on resources available.

## **I. BACKGROUND**

1. As a result of the renewed political attention to food security and nutrition, there has also been increased attention given to the need for a more comprehensive and systematic approach to understanding what actions are being implemented towards improving food security and nutrition (FSN). In order to support the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) stakeholders with this request, a proposal was presented at CFS 36 in 2010 outlining a plan to develop and implement country-owned "mapping" mechanisms (CFS: 2010/3). Mapping in this context means profiling actions (policies, programmes, strategies, plans and projects) that support FSN objectives and charting the linkages of these actions to domestic and donor resources, implementing institutions and beneficiary population groups (CFS: 2011/7).

2. The overall purpose of mapping actions for FSN is to provide national governments and other users with an improved capacity to make better informed decisions on how best to design national and regional policies, strategies and programmes and where to allocate resources to achieve food security and nutrition objectives. It should enable both national governments and their development partners to better understand how current resources are being used and where the greatest needs are for further support.

3. To this end, a CFS Actions Mapping Task Team for FSN was established to advise and provide guidance regarding the development and implementation of the process. A stepwise approach

was proposed for the development of a mapping tool that involves learning from existing tools and methods and on-going country experiences. The following outputs were produced:

- a) Review of existing action mapping type systems (2011)
- b) Technical workshop to discuss what action mapping means, identify key elements
- c) Present results to CFS 37 (2011)
- d) Share results and actions mapping experiences at FAO Regional Conferences in 2012
- e) Technical workshop on harmonization within actions mapping systems and strengthening links with National Information Systems (2012).

Highlights of the key outputs are provided below.

4. The technical consultative workshop on “Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) Actions Mapping at Country Level” that was held from 23-25 May 2011 in Rome, Italy included about 40 stakeholders and experts representing Governments, CSO/NGOs, implementing organizations (public and private technical organizations), and UN and development agencies (ref: CFS: 2011/7). The overall objective of the workshop was to improve collective understanding of the description of, and purposes for, mapping actions relevant to FSN at country-level, and what is required to make it happen. As a result of the discussion on the various components of an FSN actions mapping system, the following recommendations were made:

- a) *Institutions and Governance* - Ensuring involvement of multiple stakeholders in FSN as a multi-sectoral discipline and thus their involvement in FSN actions mapping at national level. This would require strong linkages to the decision-making process for effective FSN actions mapping, including linking the various actions to resources and involving the custodians of the national budget (Planning/Finance) and relevant Ministries with the necessary mandate and capacity to coordinate multi-sectoral issues.
- b) *Data and Information Management* – Further review of existing actions mapping systems with a clear aim of working towards a common language and compatibility among all relevant information systems. This would include identification of key FSN variables and consensus on coding schemes covering both qualitative as well as quantitative sources of FSN information.
- c) *Operational Context – Capacity, Resources and Users* - As the various building blocks for FSN actions 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. Investment in capacity development is key to ensuring that FSN actions mapping becomes part of routine functions of existing systems, thus strengthening the roles of the different stakeholders.

5. The outcome of this technical workshop was presented to CFS 37 and the Committee endorsed the recommendations and further recommended that the process of FSN actions mapping be made an integral part of National Information Systems covering the food and agricultural sectors. The Committee also encouraged all stakeholders to contribute to this process through multi-stakeholder partnerships and striving towards harmonization of existing systems at all levels. In addition, the Committee recommended that this topic be shared and discussed at the FAO Regional Conferences in 2012.

6. During the FAO Regional Conferences, the usefulness of a system for mapping food security and nutrition actions at country level was recognized in order to improve the coordination and alignment of the policies and programmes of governmental agencies and other development actors. The need to focus on partnerships and finding linkages between existing systems rather than promoting one integrated system was also highlighted.

## II. TECHNICAL CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP ON HARMONIZATION OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION ACTIONS MAPPING - September 2012

7. In response to CFS 37 recommendations, a technical workshop on “Harmonization of Food Security and Nutrition Actions Mapping – Streamlining with other Food Security and Nutrition Information Systems” was held in Rome from 3 to 5 September 2012. The purpose was to advance the discussion on harmonization of technical and institutional issues under the umbrella of FSN actions mapping among key stakeholders. The workshop addressed the following two objectives:

**Objective I:** Identify ways to improve the harmonization of methods and tools within and between specific FSN actions mapping systems with concerned partners, including the technical aspects of international standards with a view towards promoting greater compatibility and the exchange and use of data;

**Objective II:** Explore streamlining FSN actions mapping with other FSN information systems and discuss challenges and opportunities related to the integration/linkages of information sources. The Horn of Africa was used as an example.

A summary of the issues discussed during the workshop are provided below.

8. **Issue 1: Harmonization of FSN actions terminologies and coding/classification schemes across systems.** Clarity is needed on the definition of key/core actions mapping variables and their associated classification system. This will allow progress towards technical harmonization across existing systems and ensure that the agreed-upon core information is made available to country level stakeholders and decision-makers. These efforts should build on existing standards, for example, within the scope of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) Standards, to enable the development of a viable and comprehensive FSN actions mapping system, or network of systems.

9. **Issue 2: Protocols for data exchange and data ownership.** In order to ensure proper data governance and exchange and to ensure that providers of data are aware of the content that is being made publicly available, there is a need to inform data owners on protocols and best practices. Additionally, protocols on how to encourage public access of the information must be identified in an effort to increase information sharing and better access to food security information for decision-making.

10. **Issue 3: Harmonization of data collection activities and methodologies at country level.** In the longer term, and in order to reduce duplication of efforts at country level, there is a need to reach consensus on what elements of the data collection process should/could be undertaken jointly and to encourage a common understanding on data collection methodologies.

11. **Issue 4: Overcome a lack of accountability for, and investment in, actions mapping.** There is a need for a concerted effort to make actions mapping a priority to improve the ability to monitor the types of FSN interventions in relation to the situation and needs identified and their relative success rates. This is a process that would need the buy-in from key stakeholders and existing coordination mechanisms covering both humanitarian and development-oriented sub-sectors. There is a special role for OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) and the UN Humanitarian Clusters on food aid/assistance, nutrition, water, etc. to review what can and should be done to improve actions mapping and build on existing systems.

12. **Issue 5: Improve transparency through integrating actions mapping with National Information Systems.** During the review of existing systems it became evident that governments, donors as well as aid agencies are not always transparent and willing to share information about their investments and their relative success and/or failure rate. This seriously impacts the opportunities for actions mapping to be successful as it needs comprehensive coverage before proper use can be made of the tool. National ownership should be emphasized and capacity development should be prioritized to build the operational capacity to integrate FSN actions mapping into their programming cycles.

13. **Issue 6: Strengthen focus on problems of chronic food insecurity and malnutrition.** Most of the investments in FSNIS (food security and nutrition information systems) are directed towards analyzing or describing “the situation” and, in particular, for the humanitarian sector. The purpose of much of this information analysis is to inform programming to address problems of acute food insecurity and malnutrition. At the same time, there is too little attention given to the understanding of key drivers of poverty, chronic food insecurity and malnutrition. Interaction needs to be improved between the FSNIS experts covering the short-term and longer-term perspective. Disaster risk reduction and linking relief to development programming should incorporate information from both entities. Linking the situation more consistently with actions mapping and results monitoring should allow for more informed discussions between the groups and lead to better exchange and possibly a more coordinated response.

14. **Issue 7: Enhance coordination and harmonizing efforts to tackle fragmentation in FSNIS work.** Reducing “fragmentation” will require improved coordination and harmonization of approaches, conceptual models, methodologies, instruments, tools and indicators. Harmonization would allow for common goal setting, monitoring frameworks, and a chance to gain efficiencies and effectiveness through operations of scale. This should help projects and operators to potentially co-fund information activities, allowing them to allocate available resources, which on their own may be insufficient.

15. In the context of the Horn of Africa, one specific area to strengthen harmonization of existing FSNIS information outputs, would be to use the consolidated situation analysis on acute food insecurity and malnutrition, such as those produced using the IPC (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification System), and linking these to other outputs on actions mapping and results. Overlaying a consolidated IPC situation analysis with proposed and/or past actions would give us an opportunity to review coverage, complementarities and the appropriateness of the interventions for specific regions. This approach may also be beneficial as a standard exercise to be conducted for developing a Response Analysis.

#### *Outcomes of the workshop*

16. The 3-day workshop reiterated the importance of FSN actions mapping, and commended the progress that has been made over the past year by the CFS Actions Mapping Task Team. The main overall conclusions of the harmonization workshop are:

- Development actions mapping is taking place in most countries through various free-standing initiatives and systems. As a result, the available data and information is often scattered, of uneven quality, and not easily accessible and comparable across systems. Moreover the available data sets often lack information on how specific development actions contribute to better food security and nutrition. It was also noted that FSN actions mapping is poorly integrated into broader FSN information systems
- There is much scope to make better use of already available actions mapping data, information and systems. This will require a collaborative effort to: (i) improve the quality of the available data sets in terms of variables that capture the contribution that specific development actions make to FSN; (ii) make FSN data and information shareable across systems by creating and agreeing on a set of common FSN actions mapping variables, standards, and rules and protocols for data exchange; and, (iii) develop capacity for implementing and integrating FSN actions mapping in the context of broader FSN information systems at country level through and with those partners already engaged in this field of work.

17. The following recommendations were proposed based on the discussions and outcomes of the workshop.

- a) **The CFS Actions Mapping Task Team should develop a time bound work plan with clear outputs and resource requirements to:**
  - i) develop and reach agreement on a set of common variables, standards, and data exchange protocol for FSN actions mapping;

- ii) promote their application through those organizations already engaged in actions mapping;
  - iii) within the context of existing FSN systems, continue strengthening collaboration on and harmonization of FSN actions mapping across sectors and actions mapping systems operated by partners at all levels (global, regional, national, local);
- b) **Expand the current membership of the CFS Actions Mapping Task Team**, with membership from key technical partners that were involved in this workshop or otherwise involved in actions mapping, such as, IATI, UNDP, ReSAKSS<sup>1</sup>, etc. The CFS Actions Mapping Task Team could then be tasked to take up the function of facilitating a process towards setting and maintaining global standards for FSN actions mapping. This would include, identification of criteria and descriptors of FSN actions; definition and expansion of key data elements; establishment and facilitation of a community of practice; promotion of best practices; and provision of guidance towards supporting FSN actions mapping at country level, including capacity development;
- c) **Prioritize the streamlining of FSN actions mapping within ongoing policy initiatives** at the regional and national level, such as the CAADP process in Africa and similar structures in other regions. It is expected that greater focus would be achieved by pooling resources to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of our collective efforts. The main benefit would be increased accountability and transparency of knowing “Who is doing What Where” and the ability to review the actions in the light of the situation analysis and the impact of interventions. One of the key tasks will be to develop a strategy and associated communication plan to promote FSN actions mapping in the Horn;
- d) **Build on the coordination mechanisms that already exist in the Horn** and these could be used for introducing or strengthening actions mapping. CAADP was identified as the main vehicle for promoting actions mapping, using the IGAD Secretariat in Djibouti and ReSAKSS in Nairobi as the key drivers. To strengthen coordination between humanitarian and development partners, the Food Security & Nutrition Working Group (also in Nairobi) is already instrumental in consolidating the situation analysis for the Region using the IPC. Common purpose for both stakeholder groups on actions mapping could help provide much-needed focus on the (1) strengthening of existing (weak) national monitoring systems; and (2) improved use of evidence base for response analysis – reviewing the need for humanitarian versus (early) recovery assistance.

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<sup>1</sup> ReSAKSS is the Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System which is an Africa-wide network established to provide readily available analysis, data, and tools of the highest quality to promote evidence-based decision making, improve awareness of the role of agriculture for development in Africa, fill knowledge gaps, promote dialogue, and facilitate the benchmarking and review processes associated with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) agenda of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and African Union (AU) and other regional agricultural development initiatives in Africa <http://www.resakss.org>.