

# Roundtable on Measuring Food Security

## Main outcomes and recommendations

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## Background

- Roundtable was requested by the CFS (36th session) and was held on 12-13 September 2011 at FAO HQ.
- 227 registered participants, 77 from developing countries, many from Africa; 43 countries represented.
- Participation from Ministries of agriculture, national statistical offices, academia, national nutrition research institutes, permanent representations, international organizations, NGOs, and the private sector.
- Background paper prepared by FAO.
- Supported by the CFS and external donors (BMGF)
- Organized around 4 panel sessions, balanced regional and gender representation, ample time for discussion.
- Very positive feedbacks from participants and panelists, both on content and form of the discussions.

## Background (2)

- The Roundtable was motivated by the growing recognition:
  - that food security is a multi-dimensional, multifaceted phenomenon.
  - that the FAO indicator alone cannot capture all aspects of food insecurity.
  - that better measures of food security need better basic data, the involvement and ownership of countries.
  - better data and indicators cannot be produced without commensurate capacity development.
  - data needs for target, evidence-based policy making need to be identified.

# Session 1: Food security as a multidimensional problem

## Discussion points:

- Focus of the FS debate is on policy issues
  - insufficient attention to statistical measurement issues
- FS complex to measure, multidimensional concept:
  - no single indicator can capture all its dimensions
- Many indicators produced by different international organizations:
  - lack of recognized international statistical standards
  - lack of country ownership
- Uncoordinated efforts for food security information development:
  - resources scattered / food security information assistance fragmented

# Session 1: Food insecurity as a multidimensional problem

## Decision points:

- What to do?
  - Establish a **suite of core indicators**, that are **relevant and feasible** for developing countries and that all stakeholders will include into their data collection/dissemination efforts
  - Establish a **consensus on terminology and methodologies**
  - Create a **single platform for the dissemination** of the suite of indicators
- How to do it?
  - Strengthen the coordination between International Agencies
  - Involve countries in the establishment of statistical standards
  - Establish an international division of labour, specifying “who does what”.
  - Ensure full transparency + peer-review process
  - Report back to the 38<sup>th</sup> CFS in 2013

## Session 2: Gauging food deprivation: The FAO PoU indicator

- Discussion points:

- The FAO method of measuring chronic food deprivation (“undernourishment”) for global & national monitoring is statistically sound
- The accuracy and timeliness of the FAO estimates however can and must be improved:
  - Accuracy of basic data and of the FBSs
  - Appropriateness of the distributional assumption
  - Use of reliable HH survey data for updating the distributional parameters

- Decision points:

- FAO to improve its measure of undernourishment with special emphasis on improving the appropriateness of the modeling assumptions and the data used:
  - FBSs: improve quality, timeliness and product coverage
  - Test more flexible distributions
  - Increase use of existing HH surveys, particularly nationally representative food consumption /expenditure surveys
  - Explore and promote the use of integrated HH surveys

## Session 3: Capacity development and the role of countries

- **Discussion points:**

- Significant improvements in food security monitoring require strengthened capacity development efforts.
- Capacity development alignment to national statistical plans to ensure country-ownership of data collection, validation and use

- **Decision points:**

- New and existing capacity development efforts at FAO (CountryStat, Global Strategy, FSIN, ISFNS, AMIS) to be strengthened (basic statistics and food security indicators).
- Strengthened coordination among international organizations for capacity development in support of food security information
- Countries to strengthen their own, national information systems on Food Security and Nutrition.
- Resource Partners to step up support to capacity development programmes, including for FAO basic technical/methodological assistance to countries.

## Session 4: Needs for evidence-based policy making

- Discussion points:

- Policy makers need better information on all critical points along the decision making process.
- Targeted, specific and effective policy making requires a appropriate reliable and timely indicators.
- Need to align monitoring efforts with policy objectives and planning cycle

- Decision points:

- A dialogue between policy makers, statistical agencies and data providers (including private sector) should be further intensified.
- Benefits of evidence-based food security policy to be advertised and promoted.
- Implementation of twin-track policies to address food insecurity requires the establishment of a comprehensive information base (data and indicators)