



FAO

Economic and Social Development Department

Statistics Division

“Voices of the Hungry”

PGM/MUL/2012-2017/VOH

Monitoring the severity of experienced
food insecurity

(in more than 140 countries, on an annual basis)



Global Strategy
IMPROVING AG-STATISTICS

High Level Stakeholder meeting: From plan to action – Rome, Dec 2012





Monitoring food security: the experience so far ...



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Basic question

- What do we mean by “food insecurity”?
 - Traditionally:

“All people at all times have physical and economic access to safe and nutritious food”

Availability – Access – Utilization – Stability
- How do we measure it?



Three indicators ...

- Prevalence of Undernourishment (the FAO “hunger” numbers)
- Anthropometric failures (measured on children)
- Children mortality

... condensed into an index

- IFPRI’s Global Hunger Index



Recent evolutions

- The Economist Intelligence Unit's Global Food Security Index
- The FAO suite of indicators
 - Determinants
 - Availability, Physical access
 - Outcomes
 - Inadequate access, utilization
 - Risk/Vulnerability



*“While the last 20 years have seen a deepening understanding of the concept of food security, **its measurement has lagged behind.**”*

*At the global level, there are no **direct** estimates of the number of food insecure people. The most widely-cited indirect measure is the ‘prevalence of undernourishment’ (POU), constructed by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)[...]*

These estimates give no sense of the severity of hunger”

HLPE, 2012. Social protection for food security. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome 2012. (Emphasis added)



Key questions that remain unanswered

- Who are the food-insecure?
- Where do they live?
- Why are they food-insecure?
- What is the appropriate intervention to reduce food insecurity?



Important efforts have been made...

- WFP's Comprehensive Food Security Vulnerability Assessments
- FAO-ESS ADePT Food Security module

... but problems remain

- Traditional food consumption data collection strategies are inadequate for timely and comprehensive monitoring
 - Take time
 - Are expensive
 - Focus on one dimension only (access)





What's ahead: the “voices of the hungry”



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Back to definitions

- Bringing back “security” into the concept of “food security”

“a nascent third generation conceptualization [...] places food security in a broader framework of individual behavior in the face of uncertainty, irreversibilities, and binding constraints”

(Barret 2002, p. 2106)

- We need “third generation” indicators to capture an experienced based concept



The concept of experienced food insecurity has been...

- Established
 - Radimer (1990)
- Validated
 - Kendall, Olson and Frongillo (1995)
- Applied
 - USDA Household Food Security Survey Module
 - *Escala Latino Americana y Caribeña de Seguridad Alimentaria (ELCSA)*
- Its usefulness for food security governance been described
 - Pérez-Escamilla (2012)



A sound theory of measurement for unobservable constructs is available

- Psychometric Theory
 - Assigning numbers to observations in a way that best summarizes the underlying construct
 - To make inferences about latent variables in terms of statistics based upon observed variables
- It gives us a quantitative measure, that can be validated according to established statistical methods



Increased attention to people experiences and perceptions

- Opinion polls increasingly used in policy formation and debates
 - Eurobarometer
 - Latinobarómetro
 - Social Weather Stations
 - Afrobarometer
 - Gallup's WorldPoll



We are ready to scale it up at the global level

- Include a *Food Insecurity Experience Module* in the Gallup's WorldPoll, starting with the survey round of 2013
 - More than 140 countries, including all crucial emerging and developing countries
- Using a sound and common survey methodology
 - Nationally representative samples
 - Personal or phone interviews, in local language, after proper cultural and linguistic adaptation



Where are we thus far...

- Preliminary activities
 - All preliminary activities have been completed to allow for the starting of the data collection activities in 2013, if resources can be mobilized
- Governance System
 - A proper governance system is going to be established, with a steering committee and a technical advisory group of experts
- Research, Advocacy, Outreach and Capacity Development
 - Research and advocacy is being conducted. The final objective is to ensure that the standard for measuring food insecurity is **valid, endorsed** at international and country level, and **capacity development** activities are conducted to ensure the scale is properly and consistently applied in all relevant food security monitoring systems



What we shall obtain...

- Establishment of an internationally valid standard
 - Validated Food Insecurity Experience Questionnaires will be available to be used in all countries in the World to collect the data to inform the new indicators on the severity of food insecurity
- Data validation, dissemination and publication
 - Datasets on Experienced Food insecurity will be available and publicly accessible on 140 countries, through a dedicated web portal.
 - Indicators on the severity of Food Security in 140 countries will be calculated and made available on annual basis, through web based Food Security portals and official publications (could form the basis for monitoring progress towards a “zero hunger” target)





Thank you!

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