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FOOD SECURITY: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS


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INTRODUCTION

What is food security?




In this presentation we will clarify and define the concept of food security.

We will also examine what is unique about a food security approach to decision-making and achieving development objectives.

DEFINITION OF FOOD SECURITY


How would you define food security?



While **food security is a multi-dimensional concept**, we usually specialize in addressing one aspect of the larger food security problem.

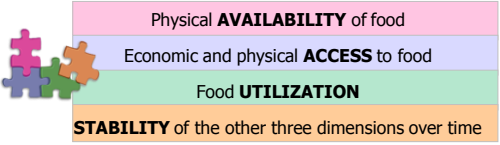
It is useful to step back from our own personal experience and examine the multi-dimensional nature of the food security concept.

DEFINITION OF FOOD SECURITY



Food Security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

This definition introduces four main **dimensions** of food security:



- Physical **AVAILABILITY** of food
- Economic and physical **ACCESS** to food
- Food **UTILIZATION**
- STABILITY** of the other three dimensions over time

DIMENSIONS OF FOOD SECURITY - AVAILABILITY

The first World Food Conference (1974) focused on the problem of **global production, trade and stocks**. Hence, the original food security debate focused on adequate supply of food and ensuring stability of these supplies through food reserves.



Subsequent food security efforts focused primarily on food production and storage mechanisms to offset fluctuations in global supply and ensure the ability to import food when needed.

Food availability addresses the "supply side" of food security and is determined by the level of food production, stock levels and net trade.

DIMENSIONS OF FOOD SECURITY - ACCESS

From the early 1980's, the importance of **food access** was increasingly recognized as a key determinant of food security.

Hence, food production is just one of several means that people have to acquire the food that they need.



Concerns about **insufficient food access** have resulted in a greater policy focus on incomes and expenditure in achieving food security objectives. This has brought food security closer to the **poverty reduction** agenda.

DIMENSIONS OF FOOD SECURITY - UTILIZATION

A third dimension – **food utilization** – has become increasingly prominent in food security discussions since the 1990s.

Utilization is commonly understood as the way the body makes the most of various nutrients in the food. This food security dimension is determined primarily by people's health status.



Food security was traditionally perceived as consuming sufficient protein and energy (**food quantity**). The importance of micro-nutrients for a balanced and nutritious diet (**food quality**) is now well appreciated.

DIMENSIONS OF FOOD SECURITY - STABILITY

The phrase "**all people, at all times**" is integral to the definition of food security, and is key to achieving national food security objectives.

"All people"



Different people are food secure to varying degrees and will be affected by adverse events differently.

"All times"



People's food security situation may change. Adverse weather conditions, political instability, or economic factors may impact on your food security status.

"At all times" refers to the **stability** dimension of food security. It emphasizes the importance of having to reduce the risk of adverse effects on the other three dimensions: food availability, access or utilization.

DIMENSIONS OF FOOD SECURITY

For food security objectives to be realized, **all four dimensions must be fulfilled simultaneously.**



For example, even if people have money (**access**), if there's no food available in the market (**availability**), people are at risk of food insecurity.

Furthermore, food security is also about quality, and that your body must be healthy to enable the nutrients to be absorbed (**utilization**).

These 3 dimensions should be **stable** over time and not be affected negatively by natural, social, economic or political factors.

DURATION AND SEVERITY OF FOOD INSECURITY


What is the nature of food insecurity?

There are important differences in how the **duration and severity** of food insecurity impact on people's lives.




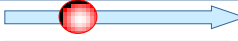
DURATION OF FOOD INSECURITY

DURATION







Inadequate food consumption may vary from a short-term experience to a life long condition.

Analysts defined **two general types of food insecurity**:

Chronic food insecurity	Transitory food insecurity
	
Chronic food insecurity is taken as long-term or persistent.	Transitory food insecurity is short-term and temporary.

DURATION OF FOOD INSECURITY

Chronic and transitory food insecurity have **different causes**:

Chronic food insecurity	Transitory food insecurity
 	 
Is often the result of extended periods of poverty, lack of assets and inadequate access to productive or financial resources.	Is relatively unpredictable and can emerge suddenly.

DURATION OF FOOD INSECURITY

An intermediate type of food insecurity is **seasonal food insecurity**.



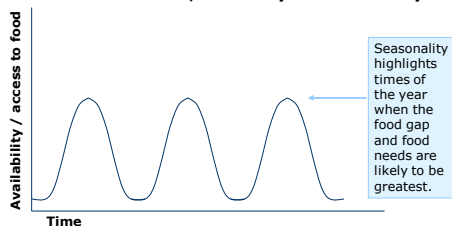
It occurs when there is a **cyclical pattern** of inadequate availability and access to food.

This is associated with seasonal fluctuations in the climate, cropping patterns, work opportunities (labour demand) and/or prevalence of diseases.

DURATION OF FOOD INSECURITY

The concept of seasonal food security falls **between chronic and transitory food insecurity**. It is similar to chronic food insecurity as it is usually predictable and follows a sequence of known events.

However, as seasonal food insecurity is of limited duration it can also be seen as a **recurrent, transitory food insecurity**.



SEVERITY OF FOOD INSECURITY

SEVERITY

The measure of the **severity of food insecurity** will influence the nature, extent and urgency of the assistance needed by affected population groups.

Food security analysts/professionals may use the term **acute food insecurity** to describe a **severe and life threatening situation**.

The most extreme situations, usually associated with substantial loss of life will warrant the description of **famine**.

SEVERITY OF FOOD INSECURITY

The intensity of food insecurity may be **measured in terms of levels of food intake**.

One option is to relate the severity of food insecurity to how consumption falls below a threshold of 2,100 kcal per day:

Food security status	Indicators
Food secure	Energy intake (measured in kilocalories)
Mild food insecurity	
Moderate food insecurity	
Severe food insecurity	

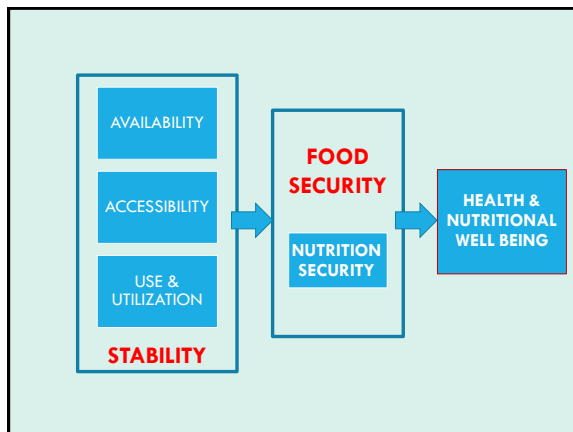
The measure for **hunger** compiled by FAO, defined as **undernourishment**, refers to the **proportion** of the population whose dietary energy consumption is less than a pre-determined threshold.

SEVERITY OF FOOD INSECURITY

Another example is the **Integrated Food Security and Humanitarian Phase Classification Framework**.

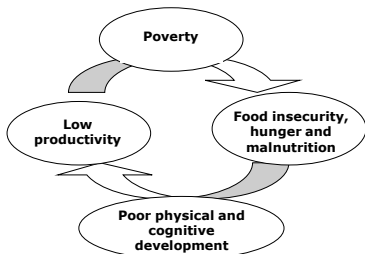
This provides a classification system for food security and humanitarian crises based on a range of livelihood needs:

Phase classification	Indicators
Generally food secure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crude Mortality Rate
Chronically food insecure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malnutrition prevalence
Acute food and livelihood crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Access/ Availability
Humanitarian emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dietary Diversity
Famine / humanitarian catastrophe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Access/Availability Coping strategies Livelihood Assets



HUNGER, MALNUTRITION AND POVERTY

The relationship between **food insecurity** and **poverty** is quite complex and can be seen as a **vicious cycle**:



HUNGER, MALNUTRITION AND POVERTY



It is argued that a strategy for attacking poverty in conjunction with policies to ensure food security offers the best hope of swiftly reducing mass poverty and hunger.

It is interesting to note that the first SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) is not simply about reducing poverty – it also maintains a distinct focus on reducing hunger.



Food Security Concepts and Framework
 What is Food Security? Screen 23 of 19

SDG2: END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

TARGETS	INDICATORS
2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round	2.1.1 Prevalence of undernourishment 2.1.2 Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)
2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment	2.3.1 Volume of production per labour unit by classes of farming/pastoral/forestry enterprise size 2.3.2 Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status
2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality	2.4.1 Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture

