Food and Nutrition Security Monitoring in the CFSVAs and FSMSs
in the Northern Sahel Countries
VAM Officer/Focal Point Review Meeting
1-3 October 2007
Dakar, Senegal

1.   Workshop Overview

This report presents a summary of a three-day workshop held in Dakar, Senegal from the first to third October, 2007. The workshop brought together the Vulnerability and Mapping (VAM) Officers and Focal Points from the five Northern Sahel countries and their government counterparts to discuss the status of on-going and planned Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) and Food Security Monitoring Systems (FSMS).

The goal of this workshop is to bring the VAM Officers/Focal Point together for a three-day review workshop with a view to improve the FSMS in each country. The specific objectives are to:

1.   Exchange information and ideas on the evolution of FSMS in the Northern Sahel and the priorities and role for WFP;

1.   Review recent data collection exercises (May/June 2007) in each country and pull out lessons learned (for example, how has the inclusion of nutrition changed FSMS?);

2.   Present information on recent meetings which selected staff attended;
        i.   The Food Scoring Methodology Workshop in March, in Rome (Koffi);
        ii. The EFSA review meeting in June, in Rome (Ibrahima);
        iii. The IPC workshop in Abidjan in June (Marie);

3.   Review findings of the two recent studies: Food Scoring and the Integration of Food Security and Nutrition in CFSVAs and FSMS; and,

4.   Review plans for next rounds of data collection (October/November 2007) and discuss ways to harmonize survey instruments, increase comparability across the five countries and decrease the time it takes to produce the reports.

2. Overview From Rome

Jan Delbaere presented an overview of objectives and content of food security analysis and monitoring. The main objective is better food security through:
- Continued monitoring of key indicators;
    - Availability;
    - Access;
    - Utilisation;
- Identification et surveillance of threats ;
- Provision of information to decision makers in a timely manner to enable them to make informed decisions (early warning).

A good system should include the following:
- An appropriate institutional framework, ideally integrated into an existing early warning system;
- Partners: government, CILSS, UN agencies, bilateral donors, NGOs;
- Good flow and integration of information;
- National and regional scope; and
- Adapted to the information needs (early warning and on-going monitoring at various levels.

Food Security Monitoring Systems are on-going monitoring systems that typically aim to collect information on a regular basis, covering the following:
- Household level food access, food expenditures, coping strategies, food consumption diversity by different livelihood and socio economic groups.

However, FSMS should also include surveillance of:

- Household food security and its changes over time;
- Nutritional status of chilren;
- Market analysis and the monitoring of market prices for staple foods, including the trade flows, prices and parties, and the level of integration of village markets;

Are the current FSMS actually doing this or do they need to be improved?

3. **Highlights of the Country Level Presentations**

   3.1   Chad

   - **Partners**: WFP, UNICEF, WHO, National Nutrition and Food Technology Center, Department of Agricultural Production, National Statistics Department and NGOs.

   - **Survey regions** included both urban and rural populations in Batha, Guéra, Kanem, Ouaddaï, and IDPs. The region of Wadi Fira was eliminated for security reasons.

   - Sample: 900 households in each region and 270 IDP households.

The food security analysis is based on the Food Consumption Score and access indicators. Nutrition assessments were based on:
   - Weight for Height;
   - Weight for Age;
   - Height for age

Selected findings :
- Close to half of all newborns begin breastfeeding within the first hour after birth;
- Very few are exclusively breastfed;
- Approximately 70 % receive complementary foods, but of poor quality;
- Malnutrition affects mostly children between 12-36 months;

- Regional comparison shows that Kanem is the worst affected in terms of chronic malnutrition;
- There is a gap between mothers' knowledge and actual feeding and care practices;
- The malnutrition rates are due to :
    ✓ Chronic food insecurity in certain regions ;
    ✓ Inappropriate care and feeding practices for infants and young children

The main recommendation is that partners and government need to develop a global response and nutrition strategy.

3.2   Niger

The Niger presentation focused on the following aspects of their sentinel site system:

- Recruitment of enumerators on a full time basis;
- Approximately 4,000 households and 4,800 children are surveyed every two months - the same households each time.
- Data is collected from the sentinel households every two months (June – December 2007) and the data are sent to Niamey for analysis via the post or commercial transporters.
- There have been logistical problems, mainly associated with using government agents' motorbikes ;
- There have also been data quality issues, in particular with the nutrition data collected in certain areas ;
- Communication and the lack of validation of results by the government is also a constraint to the process.
- To improve, the SAP is examining how to have better logistics and also decentralized data analysis.
- The plan is to expand this approach into additional sites, resources permitting.

3.3   Mauritania

In Mauritania, food security surveillance is conducted by the *Commissariat pour la Protection Sociale et la Securite Alimentaire*. Monitoring activities are carried out at several points throughout the year, by the CSA and partners, such as FEWS NET, UNICEF and WFP.

In 2007, UNICEF and the Ministry of Health conducted a nutritional survey in areas considered vulnerable to food insecurity. The study covered:
- nine wilayas (regions) ;
- 59,395 children ranging in age from six to 59 months.

This year, in addition to the other studies, the CSA undertook the Food Security Study Mauritania, with close collaboration from WFP, and covered:
- 1,166 villages ; and,
- 5,184 households across the country.

The results of this study found that approximately 23% of all households are vulnerable to food insecurity, with an estimated 10% of those being food insecure at the time of the assessment.

The presentation also highlighted certain methodological challenges faced in using the food consumption score in the Mauritania context.

3.4   Mali

In Mali, the Early Warning System was established during the famine in 1974 and continues today. There are several institutions involved in monitoring the food security situation :
- The National Council for Food Security, is a highly organized structure of national organizations, which include the EWS, responsible for food security monitoring in vulnerable zones, the Agricultural Market Organization, the OPAM, which manages the National Security Stock.

- The objectives of the SAP are :
- Put in place, maintain, improve and sustain a Food Security System to identify and manage food crises (early warning and response) ;
- To reduce the occurrence and intensity of crisis's by improving the performance and operating conditions of the cereal value chain and increasing production.

The EWS focuses on collecting both structural (population, ecology, agricultural, fishing and livestock activities, income generating activities, food habits, among others) and transitory data. The transitory data area collected in three phases :
- Phase 1 :
  - Monthly information on agro-meteorologic information ;
  - River levels ;
  - Agriculture ;
            and,
  - Phytosanitary situtaion.
- Phase 2 :
  - Permanent monitoring of socio-economic variables (pastoral movements, markets, epidemics, unusual events, such as flooding, fires, armed attacks)
- Phase 3 :
  - Situation monitoring carried out as the result of an identified problem that requires further clarification

The EWS publishes regular information bulletins.

In terms of improvements, the EWS is currently working with UNICEF, WFP an other partner to conduct a national level assessment from which to select new sentinel sites to follow on a regular basis.

3.5   Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso :

- the Ministry of Agriculture's Direction Générale des Prévisions Statistiques Agricole (DGSPA) is the lead institution for the collection, analysis and diffusion of food security information ;
- there is a working group comprised of the DGSPA, the Ministry of Health's *Direction de la Nutrition*, the *Institut de Recherche pour le Développement* (IRD), the French Ministry of Foreign Affaires/*Coopération Française*, the European Union, CILSS, MSF and other NGOs;

- The *Système d'Alerte Précoce* (SAP) was formed years ago, but has not been fully functional until recently;

- The SAP disseminates information from the DGSPA surveys in the form of either monthly bulletins or "*Agric-Alertes*", which are essentially early warning bulletins flagging events that could impact negatively on the harvest.

- The DGSPA organizes an annual survey of some 4,000 farming households (with approximately 6,000 to 7,000 children from six to 59 months of age) in 700 villages across the country to monitor food security and nutrition;

- Nutrition indicators were added in 2004 and dietary diversity was added in 2006.

One of the many interesting findings mentioned was the strong correlation between low food consumptions scores of mothers and high malnutrition among children under five years old.

4. Presentation on the Food Consumption Score

Calculating Food Consumption Score (FCS) is now considered best practice in VAM studies and food security analysis supported by WFP. Corporate guidelines on how to apply this indicator has been developed. All recent VAM studies in West-Africa have used this approach, coupled with and verified by other types of wealth and food consumption analysis. One of the advantages of the FCS over the Principal Components Analysis (PCA) and Cluster Analysis (CA) methodology, which was formerly the main approach in VAM studies, is that FCS enables comparative analysis across datasets collected in different countries or at different times.

The objective of the study was to calculate FCS in all ODD VAM datasets from 2005 onwards (where this was not already done) to allow for a comparison across space, time and livelihood groups. Datasets from a total of 18 surveys were reviewed. The number of people with different levels of consumption was compared with the results of the PCA/CA. The study report also made some recommendations on how to standardize the collection and storage of the datasets to facilitate comparisons of FCS.

The proportion of people with poor or borderline food consumption levels were found to be lower when using the FCS approach than in the original analysis using PCA/CA. The discrepancies varied between studies. When countries were ranked based on the FCS scores, the outcome was more consistent than the PCA/CA results with secondary literature on relative levels of food security in different countries. The ranking based on the FCS also corresponded closely with the results of a food consumption analysis carried out on the same datasets applying the FANTA approach (the FANTA methodology was slightly adjusted to make it applicable to the datasets at hand).

5. Presentation on the Food Security and Nutrition Integration in CFSVAs and FSMSs

The questions for food security monitoring should rather be:

1. Is there any change in the numbers of food and nutrition insecure people?
2. Is there a shift from one to another region?
3. If there is a change – can we identify certain events, interventions etc. which would enable us to explain the changes?
4. Do our interventions have any impact on the food security situation of our target group?
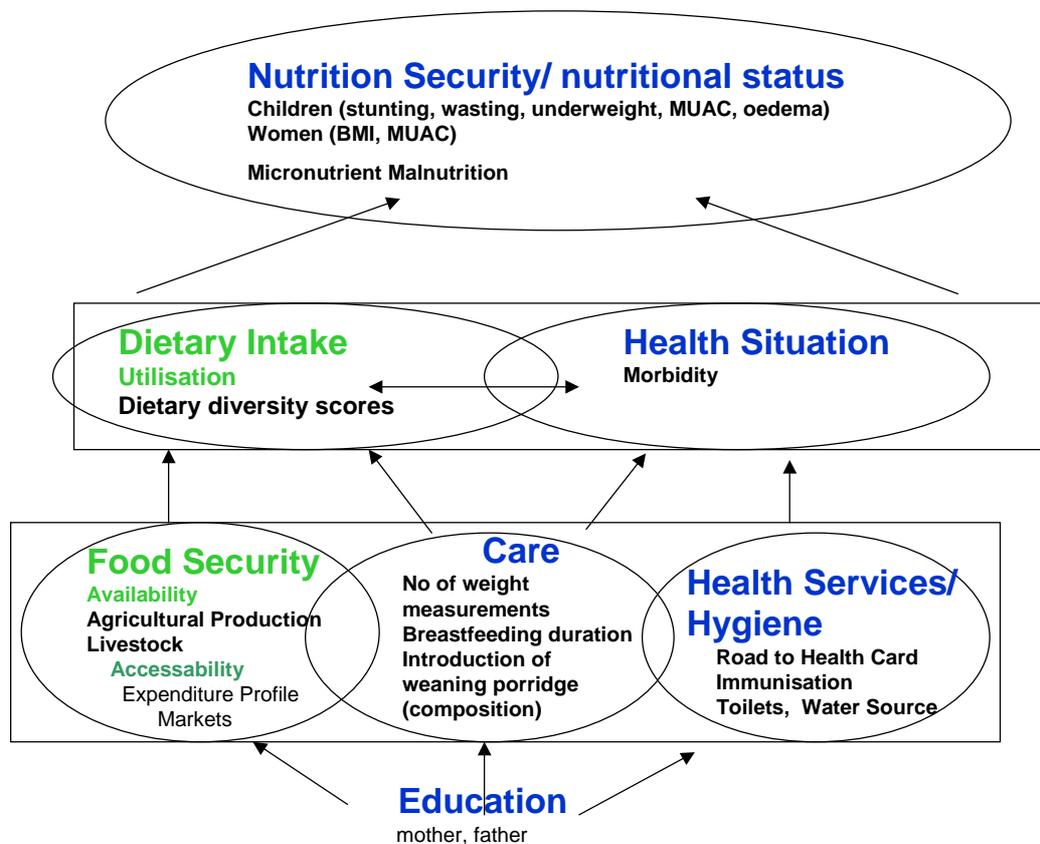
For the design of a proper monitoring questionnaire – two more issues are important:

1. It is essential to decide for each and every indicator the frequency at which these data need to be assessed in order to serve as a valid monitoring tool.

2. In consultation with statisticians it is necessary to reflect on the minimum sample size and sampling requirements. There are ethical considerations attached to this!

But there are many more questions to be asked in the context of these surveys under review:

1. Why does it happen so often, that one asks for a particular survey report and the answer given would be, "but be careful with the data, we don't rely on them too much".
2. How often should we carry out big surveys with sample sizes exceeding 1800 households?
3. Do these representative surveys really help in identifying the target group in our daily work, and if yes, to which extent?
4. What kind of information is necessary in our daily work in order to better target the malnourished and food insecure people?

Finally, one needs to look into the core indicators that should be used to describe the nutrition situation in a country and which would allow for comparison over the years and between countries.

Nutrition Security/ nutritional status
Children (stunting, wasting, underweight, MUAC, oedema)
Women (BMI, MUAC)

Micronutrient Malnutrition

Dietary Intake
Utilisation
Dietary diversity scores

Health Situation
Morbidity

Food Security
Availability
Agricultural Production
Livestock
  Accessability
  Expenditure Profile
  Markets

Care
No of weight measurements
Breastfeeding duration
Introduction of weaning porridge (composition)

Health Services/ Hygiene
  Road to Health Card
  Immunisation
  Toilets, Water Source

Education
mother, father

6.   Group Work Exercises and Results

During this session, the participants divided themselves into three groups: availability, access and utilization/nutrition. They were then asked to look at:

- key indicators;
- methodology;
- frequency;
- challenges; and,
- solutions

➢ Results of the Group Work:

Group One: Availability

Indicator	Source	Frequency	Challenges	Solutions
Production	Ministry Agriculture, Fisheries, Livestock,	1 to 2 times per year	Timing, cost, quality of data	Support to national institutions
Stock	National Statistics Assessments WFP/FAO…	2 to 3 times per year	Timing, cost, quality of data, sustainability	Simplify studies, reduce sample size, use local resources
Deficit/ Surplus	National Statistics Assessments WFP/FAO … National Offices	2 a 3 fois en fonction du contexte	Data quality, policy, UN	Support to national institutions Discussions and compromise
Markets/ Procurement	Market surveys and traders	Depends on context	Information quality, methodology (linked with monitoring of other components) collection and analysis, urban/rural and cross-border trade	Market integration study, and put in place a permanent monitoring system

- Encourage local procurement at the national level for humanitarian interventions;
- Exchange between deficit and surplus zones through improved communication ;
- National food balance sheet;
- Humanitarian action based on production levels ;
- Other components of food security are needed to complete the analysis and refine actions.

Group Two : Access

After discussing the options of indicators to use, the group recommends the following:

1- Household-level food stocks;

2- Food Consumption Score (FCS);

3- Coping Strategy Index (CSI);

4- Vulnerability perception index (FANTA)

Methodology :

- Baseline assessment for sentinel sites;
- Selection of communes (admin3) and sentinel villages;
- Return to same villages and, if possible, the same households ;
- Ensure spatial representation ; and,
- Four assessments per year.

Challenges :
- Cost;
- Quality; and
- Partner efficiency

Solutions :
- Optimise the costs by using local resources as possible ;
- Get government to put these costs in the national budget ; and,
- Leadership of government

Group Three : Utilisation and Nutrition

Recommended indicators :
- Food security
  – Food Consumption Score
- Nutrition
  – MUAC
  – Weight/height

Methodology :
- Post harvest food security and nutrition assessment at the admin 3 level ;
- Sentinel site monitoring:
  – Entire country?
  – Pre-identified zones?
  – Frequency - every months, two months, three months, four months?
- Food security assessment at the beginning of the lean season?

Challenges:
- Funding
- Partner willingness

Solutions:
- Establish a consultative framework ;
- Set up a technical committee

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Participants conclude that the FSMS and CFSVAs are often implemented differently in the different countries and contexts and those greater efforts are needed in order to make assessments more comparable. It is agreed that the survey instruments cannot be standardized due to the varying contexts, as well as governments' and partners' needs for information. However, the tools need to be harmonized.

Questions to consider in either a CFSVA or an FSMS:

- Role of the EWS in crises – advocacy? Identification?
- Use of information - - for whom and why?
- Number of indicators *absolutely* necessary
- Sample size - - how can these be minimized?
- Frequency of collection?
- Ownership- - governments must take the lead;
- Sustainability?
- Partnership are essential;
- EWSs - - need to be autonomous and focus on the technical issues, but this is not always possible;
- Consensus is crucial.

Recommendations on the continuation of FSMSs:

- Reduce the scope of the questionnaires to a maximum of five pages;
- EWSs should adopt tool leading to a better integration of the tools in the SAP methodologies;
- There needs to be a harmonized framework for the FSMS.

Recommendations to HQ:

- Ensure that all guidance notes and materials are distributed to all concerned VAM Staff – officers, focal points and consultants, as they become available; and,
- Finalize guidance/manual for the FSMS as soon as possible.

Annex 1 Agenda for the 1st – 3rd October 2007

Day 1/Time	Topic	Presenter
9:00 – 9:15	Introduction/Overview	ODD
9:15- 10:00	Update/Overview from HQ	Jan Delbaere
10:00 – 10:45	Chad Update	Ibrahima Diop
10:45-11:15	COFFEE BREAK	
11:15 – 12:00	Niger Update	Koffi Akakpo
12:00-12:45	Burkina Update	Paola Dos Santos
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH	
14:00-14:45	Mali Update	Moise Ballo
14:45 – 15:30	Mauritania Update	Papa Moussa Ndoye
15:30 – 15:45	COFFEE BREAK	
15:45-16:15	IPC Workshop	Marie Ndiaye
16:15- 17:00	Summary of Methodology Workshop	Cedric/Jan
Day 2		
8:30-9:00	Overview/Other Issues	Susan
9:00-10:30	Food Consumption Scoring Methodologies	Heidi Haugen/Guy Obama
10:30-11:00	COFFEE BREAK	
11:00-13:00	Food and Nutrition Integration Study Findings	Margot Vandervelden/Friederike
13:00-14:00	LUNCH	
14:00-16:30	Questions and clarifications on Food Security and Nutrition Continued	Jan
16:30-17:00	PDAs	Cedric
Day 3/Time		
8:30 – 10:30	The Way Forward	Jan/Cedric
11:00-12:30	Questions/Next Steps	Jan/Cedric/Susan
12:30-13:00	Closing	ODD

Annex 2   List of Participants

1. Pierre Lucas
2. Susan Gannon
3. Heidi Haugen
4. Marie Ndiaye
5. Safie Touré-Fall
6. Margot Vandervelden
7. Becca Pass
8. Paola Dos Santos
9. Koffi Akakpo
10. Rimbtebaye Riangar
11. Moise Ballo
12. Papa Moussa Ndoye
13. Mary Diallo (Mali)
14. Harouna Hamani (Niger)
15. (Chad)
16. Mahama Zoungrana (Burkina Faso)
17. Mohameden Ould Zein (Mauritania)
18. Jan Delbaere/HQ
19. Cedric Charpentier/HQ
20. Guy Obama, Consultant
21. Friederike Bellin Sesay, Consultant