

Comments by CSO on the
- D R A F T - 30 March 2010
Coming to Terms with Terminology -
'Food Security', 'Nutrition Security', 'Food Security and Nutrition'
and 'Food and Nutrition Security'

The historical information and background is helpful as well as of interest, in setting the context, and also shows the evolution that has taken place in understanding, technically and also politically. Please find below some comments related to this historical overview.

We wonder why the concepts of food sovereignty and right to food have not been mentioned in this overview. The historical background is not complete without mentioning rights-based approaches/the emergence of the food sovereignty concept. Both, the RtF as well as FSov, introduce a new, additional dimension to existing concepts of FS/NS/FNS/FSN by not only describing a condition to be achieved but also defining HOW this condition is to be achieved. The RtF-concepts establishes a clear matrix of rights and obligations which is very relevant as a background for any terminology option. - E.g. under Option 2 it says "*The CFA sets out a twin-track approach for achieving this unitary goal, and this way distinguishes between the actions that require inputs from development specialists and those that require response from specialists in humanitarian response.*" - Prior mentioning of the RtF will clarify that such actors operate in a broader matrix of responsibilities (State; international community; see 1999 General Comment No.12; VG on RtF). Introducing "Rights-based approaches" in the evolution chapter or integrating an additional box on the RtF in the text would also constitute an opportunity to clarify the content of the right and to make reference to the Voluntary Guidelines as means for establishing an "enabling environment" (and in this context in particular to VG 12 which explicitly talks about "Nutrition"). Apart from the need to include the Right to Food in the historical overview, reference to food sovereignty is needed as well, since many of us are now using the social determinants of nutrition (SDN) approach and the concept of food sovereignty¹ instead of food security. The SDN and food sovereignty are closely related. [Food sovereignty focuses on *the people's right to define their own food and agriculture rather than having food largely subject to international market forces. It aims to protect local agricultural production and trade with a view to achieving sustainable rural development. It has the potential to address gender inequalities by underpinning the struggle for women's rights*].

Page 4 Definition of famine: We would recommend to also include a short description of the possible causes of famine, not just focusing on the 'technical description' .: Famine

¹ **Food sovereignty** is a term coined by members of [Via Campesina](#) in 1996 to refer to a policy framework advocated by a number of farmers, peasants, pastoralists, fisherfolks, indigenous peoples, women, rural youth and environmental organizations to define their own food, agriculture, livestock and fisheries systems, in contrast to having food largely subject to international market forces. It comprises looking at food as a HR, protecting natural resources, reorganizing food trade, ending the globalization of food, promoting social peace and democratic control.

is defined as a lack of food that affects a wide geographic area or a large number of people. It leads to the starvation of part of the population after a phase of severe malnutrition.

Famine can be natural - especially drought and floods but also earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, destruction of crops by insects or disease. Famine can also be caused by man: (civil) war , disorders of public order or deliberate destruction of crops. Often these direct causes exacerbate already longer term existing situations of chronic food insecurity and poverty.

- Page 4 (box consequences of poor nutrition) : Vit A is not important because its deficiency causes night blindness, but also because it leads to “ overall “ blindness. Iodine deficiency is not important because it causes goiter, but it causes skeletal deformities. Furthermore the box mentions the serious consequences of malnutrition during the first 1000 days of an infants life, however it would be good to explicitly state that the consequences of malnutrition during this time span are irreversible. Hence the imperative of breaking the vicious cycle of early childhood malnutrition. It is imperative to link this with gender and position of women in society and families.
- Page 5 Nutrition: It is suggested to add to “ good physical condition” also : maintaining life, growth and normal functioning of organs and production of energy. Also nutrition is a science , or studies the reactions of the body etcetc (all of the above). Therefore nutrition encompasses physiology and pathology of nutrition as well as nutrition and public health
- Page 6: In stead of malnutrition being an “ abnormal physiological condition, please consider using the term: malnutrition is pathological condition.
- Page 7 The SUN Initiative is based on a food systems concept as opposed to a livelihood-based concept. That is the flaw many CSOs have criticized, whereas other CSO see the livelihood conspet integrated in the food system approach. To overcome this “ flaw” it is strongly recommended to explicitly mention the livelihood perspective within the food system approach. Moreover SUN focuses on achieving MDG! Which is a goal oblivious of the processes needed to get there and to sustain the progress.
- Page 7,8 FIVIMS basically chronicles the evolution of food insecurity (FI) and malnutrition; it does nothing to combat it. The 1998 CFS approach was, in that sense more correct. But the livelihood and food sovereignty issues were missed.
- Page 8 FS being politically attractive should not guide neither the CFS nor us trying to come to terms with the terminology.

- Page 8 The 2009 Decl of the World Summit on FS seemed to be a step backwards in its definition, since also “social access “was added, however still without any clear reference to nutrition
- Page 8, 9 As regards nutrition security (NS), IFPRI’s 1995 definition totally misses the non-nutrition factors! The WB’s Shakir 2006 definition is a bit better in that sense, The SUN’s Roadmap 2010 definition is again better, but the livelihood/ food sovereignty element is totally missing. The FAO/AGN March 2012 definition adds a bit on that.

It may be helpful to include in this overview of definitions the term: household food security. This term is used widely as well and may complement the overview of the terminology used. HHFS may lead to good nutrition if all hh members are nutrition secure

- Page 9 Summary; it says that Besides food intake..., additional determinants of NS at household level are..... It is not additional....those determinants are part and parcel.
- Pag. 9: FS+Nutrition. In this par. It is stated that it better “captures the underlying socioeconomic basis and underlying causes of FI and malnutrition”. It does not “bring FS+N into better focus”. We do not see how it does better capture underlying causes than for example food and nutrition insecurity. Moreover, FS+N is not consistent with the right to adequate food and the right to freedom from hunger and malnutrition.

Food and Nutrition Security: Normally we do not say ‘apples and fruit; we say ‘apples and oranges’. The concept of nutrition encompasses food (and more). We do not need to “make nutrition aspects more visible not to be neglected”. UNICEF’s 2008 definition of F+NS is not explicit about economic access –which is key. FAO/AGN 2011 correctly recognizes this. UN-HLTF March 2012 adds “F+NS for all through sustainable agriculture and food systems”. Food sovereignty captures these aspects, why not say food sovereignty? But looking at the term Food and nutrition security, still there are certain reasons yes, to explicitly mention food and nutrition security, since for a long time the link between the two has not been clear at all among technicians, practitioners and decision takers!

Related to the focus on individuals in the CFA text (page 11) . Some CSO’s place the emphasis of FI affecting populations, however others also stress that many intra household aspects, especially gender (women eating last and least) play an important role. Of course nutritional needs also differ per age , gender, level of physical activity and condition. Any terminology that is chosen should

acknowledge this multi-layer aspect of nutrition problems. See also the comment above on the summary on page 9: additional determinants of NS are part and parcel of....

On options:

1. It is not about preferences of communities of practice what we are after here! It is also not a macro/micro issue between food and nutrition. It is about using the correct terminology that allows to capture the real problem, including underlying causes as well as the interrelatedness of issues. We therefore see no “value in retaining a terminology that is consistent with...”.
2. It seems that from among the three options given the second one: Food and Nutrition Security, would attract most “votes”, reasoning that nutrition should be better and more integrated into food security policies and programmes, and the importance of embedding nutrition with food security in a conceptual way as well as linguistically. But then again others reason that yes a political level awareness of F+NS is important. But so is food sovereignty. (even more?). We are not pursuing an integration of work by different communities of practice. We are pursuing responding to the sustainable needs of those who suffer from nutrition insecurity and that is much better captured by food sovereignty. It’s not about “bringing the terminology back into line with its technical content and give more visibility to the nutrition dimension”. We are talking here about the political dimension—and food sovereignty does just that. If “the human being is the starting point” then F+N insecure people have to be at the center and food sovereignty does just that.
3. It would be best to try to agree a standardised term, which would be much more preferable to establishing a second one and using them at different times. This would still leave room for confusion and lack of clarity. As mentioned in the 4th paragraph in the document itself, *‘lack of consistency in the use of these terms across disciplines has often led to confusion and prevented meaningful discussion on how best to achieve food security and improve nutrition’*. This is a very real and important point which would remain the case if two terms can be used interchangeably. Policy makers would continue to encounter problems caused by the confusion around terminology.
4. We wonder why the document does not also include the option of using the term nutrition security. Nutrition capturing both the food and non-food aspects (also see above: we do not speak of apples and fruit...)

General remark about use of language: While further working on the draft, the authors need to take into account that this note will be read by policy makers in the first place. Therefore language must be accessible, also for people who do not have specific expertise in the area of nutrition.

