The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), through its Food Security and Nutrition Statistics team, produces key indicators for tracking progress in eliminating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

The team develops methods and tools that FAO, its global partners, regional organizations and national governments use to gather valuable evidence on global, regional, and country food security and nutrition trends. The food security indicators are compiled and publicly disseminated through the FAOSTAT digital platform and the United Nations Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) database.

Area of work

> Developing and promoting the adoption and country ownership of standards, methodologies and tools for generating theoretically grounded and statistically sound food consumption and food security indicators that are comparable across countries, as well as building the capacity of national institutions in food security and nutrition measurement.

> Producing regular estimates of two indicators of the SDGs monitoring framework: the prevalence of undernourishment (PoU), which is FAO’s traditional indicator of chronic hunger (SDG Indicator 2.1.1.), and the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) (SDG Indicator 2.1.2.).

> Co-leading the preparation of FAO’s annual flagship publication “The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World” (SOFI), which provides every year the most up-to-date values of the indicators relating to SDG 2.1 and 2.2 targets, “End hunger and ensure access by all people to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round; and end all forms of malnutrition by 2030.”

> Compiling indicators on the cost and affordability of a healthy diet, a measure of economic access to nutritious foods and healthy diets that are a key link between food security and nutrition.

> Providing technical support to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) on food security measurement and on the statistical aspects of the analyses.
Core objectives

> Produce food security and nutrition-relevant indicators.
> Develop methodologies and statistical and analytical tools to monitor food security at the global, regional and country levels.
> Empower countries to adopt these methodologies and use the resulting information appropriately to inform their policies on food security and nutrition.
> Build the statistical capacity of countries to monitor SDG indicators 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 according to international standards.

Key outputs

Data collection and dissemination

> Update the FAOSTAT digital platform domains relating to:
  • food security and nutrition, including the series of SDG indicators 2.1.1 (prevalence of undernourishment) and 2.1.2 (prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity) and the suite of food security indicators.
  • the cost and affordability of a healthy diet.

Methodological work

> Develop and update methodologies and analytical tools to calculate food security indicators at the national and subnational levels, including the prevalence of undernourishment and the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity based on the FIES.
> Develop methodologies and analytical tools for collecting and analysing FIES data in the context of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification and Cadre Harmonisé.
> Develop and improve analytical methods for food consumption data collected in population surveys (household and individual) to compute nutrition-relevant indicators.

Capacity development

> Provide training and technical assistance to countries to:
  • Collect and analyse data on food consumption and produce food security and nutrition indicators; and
  • Adapt and include the FIES survey module in national surveys, analyse the data, and produce estimates of the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity.
> Promote self-study via self-paced or tutored e-learning, or through multimedia and printed manuals.

Food security and nutrition statistics

FURTHER INFORMATION:  www.fao.org/about/who-we-are/departments/statistics-division/en/

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