



联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Organisation des Nations  
Unies pour l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная организация  
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

# ASIA AND PACIFIC COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

## Thirtieth Session

**The Soaltee Kathmandu, Kathmandu, Nepal  
19-24 May 2024**

**Advancing the New Statistical Domain on Food Security and Nutrition for  
Improved Official Statistics and Informed Policies**

### Executive summary

In 2020, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) recognized the importance of timely, relevant data and appropriate analysis tools to support evidence-based policymaking for achieving food security and adequate nutrition, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The [CFS policy recommendations on strengthening collection and use of FSN data and related analysis tools](#) endorsed during the [fifty-first plenary session](#) of CFS in October 2023 emerged as a culmination of an inclusive multi-year process, guided by the insights of the Committee's High-level Panel of Experts on FSN (HLPE-FSN) who produced the background document, titled "[Data Collection and Analysis Tools for Food Security and Nutrition: Towards Enhancing Effective, Inclusive, Evidence-Informed Decision-Making](#)" (2022). These policy recommendations were endorsed as an action-oriented, inter-governmentally agreed, voluntary and non-binding, global policy framework in support of country-led efforts towards improving FSN policies and actions. They contain a collective call for action targeting diverse stakeholders, including national statistical systems, with an objective of further strengthening FSN data systems for improving decision-making in support of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.

Following CFS policy recommendations and acknowledging the fragmented landscape of FSN data across various entities, including international agencies, government sectors, and public and private institutions, the Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO), CFS, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and World Health Organization (WHO) proposed to establish a new statistical domain on FSN and a programme of work for the development of an international definition for FSN data, a minimum set of data to measure and monitor the state of FSN and guidance to support countries in prioritizing the production of FSN data under the aegis of United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC). This proposal was endorsed during the fifty-fifth session of the Commission from February 27 to March 1, 2024 ([Decisions 55/110 on Agriculture and rural statistics \(a\), \(d\) and \(e\)](#)). This paper provides more information on the CFS recommendations and the activities undertaken by FAO, the CFS, UNICEF and WHO to advance their implementation.

### Suggested actions by APCAS

The APCAS is invited to recommend the following actions from Members:

- Acknowledge the importance of CFS policy recommendations on strengthening collection of FSN data and related tools and support its promotion and implementation at national level.
- Recognize the importance of establishing an internationally-agreed definition for FSN data, a minimum set of FSN data, statistics and indicators and guidance on their prioritization in national-level programs, policies, and strategies to improve national policy making and its role in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other national, regional and international development agendas.
- Provide feedback and views on the programme of work of FAO, CFS, WHO and UNICEF encapsulated in this paper and encourage APCAS members to actively participate and contribute to this work, acknowledging that Members' engagement can be facilitated either through expert groups or discussions within the framework of the UNSC and participation is essential to ensure comprehensive and inclusive representation of regional perspectives.

*Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:*

APCAS Secretariat; Email: [APCAS-Secretary@fao.org](mailto:APCAS-Secretary@fao.org)  
[valerie.bizier@fao.org](mailto:valerie.bizier@fao.org); [arbab.khan@fao.org](mailto:arbab.khan@fao.org)

## I. Introduction

### Context:

1. During its [forty-sixth session in](#) 2020, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) recognized the urgent need to address unprecedented challenges in global Food Security and Nutrition (FSN). The committee emphasized the importance of timely, relevant data and appropriate analysis tools to support evidence-based policymaking for achieving food security and adequate nutrition, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. The [CFS policy recommendations on strengthening collection and use of FSN data and related analysis tools](#) endorsed during the [fifty-first plenary session](#) of CFS in October 2023 emerged as a culmination of an inclusive multi-year process, guided by the insights of the Committee's High-level Panel of Experts on FSN who produced the background document, titled "[Data Collection and Analysis Tools for Food Security and Nutrition: Towards Enhancing Effective, Inclusive, Evidence-Informed Decision-Making](#)" (2022).
3. These policy recommendations were endorsed as an action-oriented, inter-governmentally agreed, voluntary and non-binding, global policy framework in support of country-led efforts towards improving FSN policies and actions. They contain a collective call for action targeting diverse stakeholders, including national statistical systems, with an objective of further strengthening FSN data systems for improving decision-making in support of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.
4. In addressing immediate challenges and actions identified by the policy recommendations, FAO in collaboration with the CFS, UNICEF and WHO has proposed programme of work that aims to develop an internationally agreed definition for FSN data, a minimum set of data and indicators beyond the existing SDG monitoring framework, guidance to countries on the prioritization of FSN data at national level and a new FSN domain under the aegis of UNSC. These efforts seek to promote collaboration, standardization, and inclusivity in data collection and its utilization and to put in place a more unified and systemic view of FSN in agri-food systems.
5. Acknowledging the disparities in global data production capacity and availability, the above-mentioned FAO's proposed programme of work aims to address domain-specific, geographical, and group-specific data gaps. The focus lies on implementing CFS recommendations to overcome

challenges related to limited and fragmented FSN data and statistics and involves enhancing collaboration among relevant stakeholders, including member states and international organizations to lay a robust foundation in the proposed new data domain. The objective is to improve the availability, accessibility, accuracy, and effective use of data for policy and decision-making, ultimately supporting comprehensive monitoring of FSN efforts worldwide.

6. This proposal was submitted to and discussed at the [fifty-fifth session](#) of the UNSC in February-March 2024. A [side event was](#) organized in parallel to the UNSC session by FAO and UNICEF with support of CFS and WHO to further discuss and communicate the CFS policy recommendations to countries and international organizations present at the event, drawing attention to their implications and opportunities at national, regional, and global levels. The UNSC welcomed the CFS policy recommendations and approved the inclusion of a new agenda item on FSN statistics under its aegis. In particular, the Statistical Commission ([Report on the fifty-fifth session](#) - 27 February–1 March 2024, page 17, refer to section 55/110 a, d, e) endorsed the programme of work of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Food Security, Agricultural and Rural Statistics (UNCEAG)”; “(d) Welcomed the CFS policy recommendations on strengthening collection and use of FSN data and related analytical tools; and (e) Approved the inclusion of a new agenda item on FSN statistics under the aegis of the Commission and invited FAO, WHO and UNICEF to report progress made on this item every two years and recommended to the UN Committee of Experts on Statistical Classification to consider FSN as a standalone statistical data domain in the Classification of statistical activities and to report back to the Commission.”

## **II. CFS recommendations, implications for the AFCAS Members and next steps**

7. As highlighted above, the CFS has endorsed comprehensive policy recommendations on strengthening collection and use of FSN data and related analysis tools in its fifty first session “Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition<sup>1</sup>”. The formulation of these recommendations involved extensive deliberations, spanning over 100 hours of formal negotiations, including meetings with the Friends of the Rapporteur. This rigorous process underscores the depth of commitment and collective effort invested in shaping a comprehensive and actionable framework for strengthening FSN data systems for greater impact.

8. The aforementioned [CFS document](#) presents a compelling rationale and is crafted to address the multifaceted dimensions of the challenges and constraints impairing the collection and use of FSN data. The Committee’s High-level Panel of Experts on FSN who produced the background document, titled "Data Collection and Analysis Tools for Food Security and Nutrition: Towards Enhancing Effective, Inclusive, Evidence-Informed Decision-Making" and deliberations underscored several persistent challenges within the FSN data landscape. Paramount among these is the absence of a universally agreed-upon definition for FSN data, coupled with inadequate investments in national data systems and suboptimal prioritization of data for developmental purposes. At the national level relevant FSN data stems from diverse sectors, is fragmented, resides and stored in different systems, and lack standardization as it falls under the purview of different ministries and agencies.

9. The resulting CFS policy recommendations serve as a clarion call to action, targeting a diverse array of stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, civil society, private sector entities, philanthropic foundations, and donor communities, reflecting the collaborative effort required to effect meaningful change in FSN data collection and reporting systems. The inclusivity of these aspects underscores the collective commitment towards improving data driven strategies and policies for improved FSN outcomes. This marks a significant milestone in international policy discourse, where consensus has been reached on tangible measures to strengthen FSN data systems.

10. APCAS Members, as stakeholders of National Statistical Systems (NSS) and the broader international statistical community should see these policy recommendations as an opportunity to

---

<sup>1</sup> Titled: “[CFS Policy recommendations on strengthening the collection and utilization of FSN data to enhance national decision-making processes in support of realizing the fundamental right to adequate and nutritious food within national food security frameworks](#)”

increase the contribution and relevance of their work on FSN data by promoting and showing leadership in advancing the implementation of the CFS policy recommendations. Indeed, these recommendations, as summarized in the Figure 1 and the paragraphs below, hold significant implications for APCAS members and country institutions especially in their efforts to implement adequate systems to improve FSN data at national level, i.e. upgrading the statistical infrastructure and systems to facilitate collection of the FSN data and its utilization for policy and decisions. In addition, APCAS member countries as stakeholders in intergovernmental bodies such the UNSC have a role to play in advancing CFS policy recommendations that call for establishing international standards related to FSN data, elevating this statistical data domain in global agendas and promoting greater harmonization, coherence and interoperability of FSN data at global level (see in red in Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Summary of CFS Recommendations and possible contributions of AFCAS members**

1. CREATE GREATER AWARENESS AND DEMAND FOR BETTER USE OF FSN DATA IN DECISION-MAKING	2. INCREASE AND OPTIMIZE INVESTMENT IN THE COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND ENHANCEMENT OF FSN DATA	3. DEVELOP CAPACITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGIES	4. COLLABORATION ON HARMONIZATION AND SHARING OF FSN DATA	5. STRENGTHEN FSN DATA GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish multisectoral and multistakeholder FSN mechanisms (1a)</li> <li>Promote dialogues and cooperation (1b)</li> <li>Promote the regular production and dissemination of evidence-based FSN knowledge products (1e)</li> <li>Develop guidelines on data-informed policy evaluation (1g)</li> <li>Use existing data (1c/f/j) and promote interoperability (1j)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase, sustain and coordinate investment on FSN data (2a/f/g)</li> <li>Build on existing FSN data funding initiatives (2h)</li> <li>Elaborate national plans to define priorities, integrated in the NSDS (2b)</li> <li>Outline a minimum set of core FSN data to help countries identify priorities when collecting FSN data (2d)</li> <li>Identify data gaps and needs and accelerate innovation (2e)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in building the capacities of statisticians, data experts and social scientists (3a)</li> <li>Modernize infrastructures (3b/c)</li> <li>Expand training opportunities (3d/e/f)</li> <li>Invest in innovation and cost-saving approaches (3g/i)</li> <li>Prioritize capacity development for greater impact (3h)</li> <li>Reduce language barriers (3k)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote harmonization, coherence and interoperability of FSN data and platforms (4a)</li> <li>Consider FSN statistics as a domain in the UNSC (4b)</li> <li>Treat FSN data as open as possible but as closed as necessary to serve the public good (4d)</li> <li>Promote the use and integration of FSN data from various sources (4e)</li> <li>Increase collaboration on data access/sharing (4f)</li> <li>Promote compliance with open-access and fair use principles (4h)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include FSN data within a broader national data governance (5a)</li> <li>Discuss the development of FSN data principles (5c)</li> <li>Non-state actors are encouraged to share FSN data and analytics for the public good (5d)</li> </ul>

For more information: <https://www.fao.org/3/nn152en/nn152en.pdf>

**11. Recommendation 1 – Create greater awareness and demand for better use of FSN data in decision-making:** National governments, including National Statistical Offices (NSO) and other relevant national institutions and organizations have been encouraged by CFS to prioritize several key actions to enhance the use of FSN in decision-making. These include strengthening or establishing effective national multi-sectoral and multistakeholder mechanisms to guide FSN policy and programme planning aligned with national development agendas. These mechanisms must engage civil society, academia, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and other stakeholders to set priorities collaboratively. Additionally, governments have been advised to promote and facilitate dialogues and cooperation among diverse stakeholders at both national and sub-national levels to identify FSN data priorities, to stimulate the analysis of existing data, and to discuss most effective dissemination platforms/means for FSN data. In addition, CFS recommended leveraging the use of FSN data from various sources, while considering factors like quality, timeliness, and cost, is essential to provide evidence for policymaking. Moreover, the governments have been suggested to integrate detailed data annexes into FSN-related legislation and policies, outlining available data sources and analytic tools utilized. Lastly, it has been highlighted that promoting the regular production and dissemination of user-friendly knowledge products summarizing key insights from government data initiatives is crucial, targeting decision-makers and stakeholders, including those in rural and remote areas.

**12. Recommendation 2 – Increase and sustain investment in the collection, analysis and enhancement of quality and prioritized FSN data, while optimizing and/or repurposing current resources, to improve decision-making, for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security:** National governments are recommended by CFS to increase and sustain investment, with support from international organizations and donors when needed, for timely, quality, and disaggregated FSN data production, including resources for developing national standards and good practices. Additionally, the national institutions are encouraged to develop participatory national plans to prioritize FSN data collection and analysis and its integration with National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), aligning with international standards and good practices, while also regularly reviewing and modernizing existing data-collection systems relevant for FSN. In the same vein, the international organizations are encouraged to provide guidance on a minimum set of core FSN data and methodologies and upon request from national governments, to assist them in identifying data collection priorities. Lastly, all key stakeholders i.e. governments, international organizations are recommended to collaborate on identifying data gaps and needs, promote innovation in statistics and data science, and address conflicts of interest in FSN data collection efforts.

**13. Recommendation 3 – Develop capacities and the infrastructures and technologies needed to ensure the sustainability and equity of FSN-data production cycle and analytic capacity for decision-making:** Government institutions and organizations (NSOs and others) advised to invest in training for FSN statisticians, data experts, and social scientists to strengthen expertise in data analysis, risk assessment, and privacy, while also modernizing national statistics infrastructures for sustained collection of quality FSN data with support from national and international organizations. Additionally, to promote expanding training opportunities (including through South-South and Triangular Cooperation) for staff in national statistics offices and other government units and relevant stakeholders, for national statistics staff and stakeholders to enhance analytic competencies and building capacity among diverse stakeholders in analyzing and utilizing FSN data are essential. In addition, with support from international organizations and other relevant stakeholders, the government institutions (including NSO and others) are encouraged to invest in innovative, cost-efficient capacity building in regions with limited FSN data resources to address data gaps and enhance food security, improve existing and develop new analytic models through participatory assessments for better FSN decision-making, and expand language options for FSN e-learning resources and tools to ensure accurate translations and facilitate peer-to-peer learning, thereby overcoming language barriers.

**14. Recommendation 4 – Collaboration among parties on harmonization and sharing of FSN data:** The CFS calls upon national governments and its relevant national institutions to promote harmonization, coherence, and interoperability of FSN data and platforms, while upholding data rights and privacy. Government institutions are also encouraged to consider integrating FSN statistics as a domain within the UNSC, aligning with ongoing UN intergovernmental processes. Furthermore, governments are encouraged to publicly disseminate macro, micro, and metadata pertinent to FSN, ensuring accessibility for policy, program, and research purposes, while adhering to data protection principles and national regulations and balancing openness and confidentiality to serve public interests and support SDGs. Additionally, enhancing collaboration in accessing and sharing data on international food and agricultural trade, including strengthening instruments like the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), while focusing on local, national, and regional market data protection is identified as essential. International organizations tasked with generating critical FSN data should enhance partnerships with governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector to standardize FSN data collection methods and indicators, particularly for food security assessments, and consult with governments to strengthen coordination in releasing datasets and knowledge products. Finally, governments, international organizations, research institutions, civil society, and the private sector should advocate for FSN data compliance with open-access and fair use principles, including UNFPOS and FAIR principles, ensuring availability and reusability while respecting data protection, privacy, and intellectual property rights and seeking free prior and informed consent when necessary to promote fairness, inclusion, and equitable distribution of benefits in data sharing.



**15. Recommendation 5 – Strengthen FSN data governance frameworks at local and national levels and foster related dialogue at global level:** National governments are encouraged to incorporate FSN data into national statistical and relevant data systems, aligning with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and considering principles such as human dignity, non-discrimination, equity, justice, gender equality, participation, transparency, and accountability. They should strengthen or develop policies, in consultation with stakeholders, to enhance transparency, accountability, and compliance with national legislation regarding the collection, storage, processing, and sharing of FSN data. Governments and international organizations should foster inclusive, participatory multi-stakeholder processes to establish FSN data principles supporting the right to adequate food and ethical considerations, decision-making roles, and national accountability systems. The private sector, civil society, academia, and philanthropic foundations are encouraged to share FSN data and analytics for the public good, respecting confidentiality and data privacy, and explore mechanisms to enhance the prompt and widespread availability of their data while ensuring proper protection.

*Implementation of key CFS recommendations – Next steps*

16. Drawing from the aforementioned context in general and addressing the CFS recommendations 2d, 4a and 4b in particular, the FAO (in collaboration with the CFS, WHO and UNICEF) and partner countries has formulated a programme of work on FSN data under the UNSC.

17. In particular, this programme of work pursues the following objectives:

- a. establish a new data domain and technical working group on FSN data under the aegis of the Statistical Commission.
- b. develop an internationally-agreed definition for FSN data and propose a nomenclature for the FSN data domain under the international [classification of statistical activities](#).
- c. propose a minimum set of core data, statistics and indicators necessary to inform the state of food security and nutrition (i.e. FSN at the individual and micro-level) with references to recommended methodologies and data sources.
- d. develop and validate a guidance document to assist countries in adopting, implementing and prioritizing the collection and use of relevant data on FSN, which will include the proposed definition of FSN data and minimum set of core FSN data and indicators.
- e. present the guidance document for endorsement at the 56<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Statistical Commission.
- f. conduct outreach, advocacy, communication, and training activities on the endorsed document.

18. As of May 2024, the first objective had already been achieved. As described in the introduction, in March 2024, at its 55th session, the UNSC approved the inclusion of a new agenda item on FSN statistics under its auspices and the establishment of a technical workstream on FSN data under the aegis of the UN-CEAG. (Report on the fifty-fifth session - 27 February–1 March 2024, page 17, refer to section 55/110 a and e).

19. Activities supporting objectives b, c and d of the work programme have also been initiated. It is expected that a first draft of the definition, minimum set of core FSN data, statistics and indicators, and annotated outline will be developed between May and July and discussed in an expert group meeting in July. The guidance document will be further developed and finalized during fall of 2024, in time for its submission for endorsement to the UNSC in March 2025. Finally, the capacity development and outreach activities will be planned in 2025, depending on the outcomes of the UNSC meeting.

### III. Conclusions

20. The global FSN landscape faces unprecedented challenges, necessitating urgent action to address rising levels of hunger and malnutrition. The CFS has played a pivotal role in advancing policy recommendations to strengthen the collection and use of FSN data, emphasizing the importance of timely, relevant, and granular data for evidence-based decision-making. Collaborative efforts involving the CFS, FAO, UNICEF, WHO, and other stakeholders (including several member countries) have led to significant milestones including the establishment of new FSN domain, adoption of programme of work under the aegis of the UNSC and the creation of a workstream under the UN-CEAG. The development of an international definition for FSN data, a minimum set of data to measure and monitor the state of FSN and guidance document to support countries in prioritizing the production of FSN data has also been initiated with the objectives to further implemented the policy recommendations.

21. The APCAS is invited to recommend the following actions from Members:

- a. Acknowledge the importance of CFS policy recommendations on strengthening collection of FSN data and related tools and support its promotion and implementation at national level.
- b. Recognize the importance of establishing an internationally-agreed definition for FSN data, a minimum set of FSN data, statistics and indicators and guidance on their prioritization in national-level programs, policies, and strategies to improve national policy making and its role in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other national, regional and international development agendas.
- c. Provide feedback and views on the programme of work of FAO, CFS, WHO and UNICEF encapsulated in this paper and encourage APCAS members to actively participate and contribute to this work, acknowledging that Members' engagement can be facilitated either through expert groups or discussions within the framework of the UNSC and wider participation is essential to ensure comprehensive and inclusive representation of regional perspectives.