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The use of the Food Insecurity Experience Scale to inform IPC/CH assessments.

NAME OF AUTHORS

Filippo Gheri, Food Security Statistician

Sara Viviani, Statistician

ORGANIZATION

Food and Agriculture Organization

SUMMARY

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) is a measurement system developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for the severity of the food insecurity condition experienced by households or individuals. The FIES has been widely used in various countries to inform food security policies and programs, and it became the methodology at the base of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicator 2.1.1 to monitor access to food (Goal 2). In recent years, the FIES has also been proved to be useful to inform the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and *Cadre Harmonisé* (CH) assessments. This paper aims at exploring the use of FIES in IPC/CH assessments, including its advantages, limitations, best practices, and challenges. The paper also provides recommendations for how FIES can be used more effectively in IPC/CH assessments.

1. INTRODUCTION

This document serves as a comprehensive exploration of the integration of the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) into the framework of Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) assessments. It highlights the significance of FIES as an essential data source for IPC assessments, offering a detailed, standardized, and nuanced approach to measuring food insecurity. The primary purpose is to inform policymakers, practitioners, and researchers about the potential benefits and challenges associated with incorporating the FIES into IPC assessments, thereby enhancing our understanding of food security on a global scale.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and the *Cadre Harmonisé* (CH) are two widely used classification systems for assessing food security and acute malnutrition in countries facing crises. However, both IPC and CH have been sometimes criticized for their reliance on limited primary data sources, which can lead to inaccurate or incomplete assessments. In recent years, the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) has emerged

as a reliable and flexible survey-based tool measuring food security at different severity levels and generating primary information on access to food within different food security monitoring and classification systems.

The FIES consists of three key components:

- Survey Module (FIES-SM): This module comprises a set of survey questions, typically eight core questions, with dichotomous yes/no responses.
- Analytic Protocol: A robust analytical protocol is employed to convert the survey data into a probabilistic measure of the food insecurity status of the population of interest ranging among various possible severity levels.
- Reference Scale: A reference scale is used to calibrate the data and ensure comparability across different regions and populations.

The FIES-SM is highly flexible and can be implemented at the individual or household level. Additionally, it provides insights into food insecurity experiences over varying time frames, such as the past year, past 30 days, or both.

The IPC framework, on the other hand, is not a direct food security indicator but rather a systematic process that assembles evidence-based consensus among key stakeholders to classify the severity and extent of food insecurity and malnutrition. It utilizes standardized procedures and technical consensus-building to make informed assessments. IPC has three distinct scales:

- Acute Food Insecurity: Focuses on identifying areas with a significant proportion of households experiencing severe food energy shortages or livelihood changes that endanger lives or livelihoods.
- Chronic Food Insecurity: Concentrates on identifying areas with a substantial proportion of households with a long-term inability to meet essential food requirements in terms of both macro- and micronutrients.
- Acute Malnutrition: Aims to identify areas with a substantial proportion of children suffering from wasting or edema.

These scales encompass various food security and malnutrition indicators and specific thresholds for classifying severity and identifying key drivers. IPC assessments involve collaborative analyses conducted by technical working groups, including representatives from government bodies, international organizations, NGOs, and civil society. These groups assess food security and nutrition situations based on existing available information to make informed decisions.

The integration of the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) into Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) assessments represents a significant advancement in the field of food security analysis. The FIES offers the capacity to provide disaggregated, comparable, and nuanced data, which is crucial for making informed decisions and targeting interventions effectively. As data availability and analysis techniques improve, the FIES is poised to play an increasingly pivotal role in enhancing our understanding of food security on a global scale. This document aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of these concepts and foster informed decision-making in the realm of food security and malnutrition.

2. FIES WITHIN IPC/CH

The FIES

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) is a measurement system for the severity of the food insecurity condition experienced by households or individuals. Specifically, it consists of:

- A survey module (FIES-SM) (or the tool) used to collect data (i.e., answers to survey questions);
- An analytic protocol to convert the data collected in the survey, into a probabilistic measure (i.e., a probability distribution for possible severity measures) of the food insecurity condition of the population of interest;
- A reference scale used for calibration and to ensure comparability.

The FIES-SM is composed of eight core questions (or items) with dichotomous yes/no responses. Data collected through the FIES-SM can be used to produce measures defined on a uni-dimensional scale spanning different levels of severity. The FIES items should always be analyzed together as a scale, never as separate items, when producing

and reporting food insecurity estimates. The FIES-SM is a flexible tool¹ and individual-referenced and household-referenced versions are available. Choice of the module depends on whether the objective is to assess:

- Reference population: food insecurity in the population of individuals or households;
- Reference period: food insecurity experienced during the past year (12 months), or the past 30 days, or both.

For the FIES-SMs that include a 30-day reference period, the last three questions, which refer to the most severe food insecurity situations, follow the wording of the Household Hunger Scale (HHS), with frequency of occurrence follow-up questions (whether an experience occurred Rarely, Sometimes or Often). This makes it possible to also compute the HHS indicator and using it to inform Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) assessments, with a survey module limited to a total of eight questions.

The FIES belongs to a broader class of experience-based food security measurement scales (EBFSS), which encompasses various other scales such as the Radimer-Cornell scale, the Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM), the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS), the Brazilian Food Insecurity Scale (EBIA), and the Latin American and Caribbean Food Security Scale (ELCSA). These scales are characterized by their reliance on qualitative responses, typically in the form of yes/no answers or ordered frequencies like never, rarely, sometimes, and often.

Under specific and stringent measurement conditions, the qualitative responses gathered from these survey questions can be transformed into a numeric, integer score, serving as an ordinal indicator of the severity of food insecurity. Once the scoring system is established, classifying respondents into different food insecurity levels (e.g., mild, moderate, severe) is straightforward. This simplicity has contributed to the widespread success of these scales, particularly among epidemiologists investigating the health and nutrition consequences of limited food access.

However, it's crucial to recognize that these scales are subject to stringent conditions, particularly the measurement assumptions of the Rasch model, which ensures the validity and invariance of the measurements. The Rasch model, originally developed in educational testing and applied to various social sciences fields, relies on several key conditions: (a) referring both items and the respondent's attribute to the same unidimensional, non-observable (latent) trait, (b) ensuring a monotonic (logistic) relationship between responses and the respondent's attribute, (c) maintaining equal discrimination across all items, and (d) preventing systematic relationships between item responses other than the measure of food insecurity. The importance of adhering to these conditions lies in preserving the validity of the scale as a measure of the specific attribute being studied.

While the HFIAS, ELCSA, and HHS also belong to the EBFSS category, their data should ideally undergo Rasch-based preliminary validation to ensure accuracy. Neglecting these validations could lead to measurement biases, especially when enumerators lack expertise or a full understanding of the survey tools. Nevertheless, it is possible to apply Rasch modelling to identify unfitting items and develop a valid classification. This process may necessitate the exclusion of certain items, which would require a calibration of the shortened scale to maintain equivalence in the thresholds used for classification. Unfortunately, the Rasch-based preliminary validation of HFIAS, ELCSA or HHS data is often dropped in practice, and this is particularly relevant for the HHS, which has been used extensively in food security assessments (including IPC).

Instead, the key innovation of the FIES methodology is that it produces food insecurity prevalence estimates whose validity and reliability can be formally assessed and that can be compared across countries, sub-populations within a country and over time. The strength and rigor of the analytic approach, coupled with the long-tested robustness of the specific questions of the FIES, make it capable of producing reliable food insecurity prevalence estimates, even in countries with very low or very high rates of food insecurity.

The Integrated Phase Classification and the Cadre Harmonisé

The IPC, along with the Cadre Harmonisé (CH) – a similar framework employed in West Africa and the Sahel – is characterized as "a process to establish evidence-based technical consensus among key stakeholders" for the purpose of "categorizing the severity and extent of food insecurity and malnutrition" (IPC Global Partners, 2021).

¹ The different versions of the FIES-SM can be found here: <https://www.fao.org/3/bl404e/bl404e.pdf>.

This signifies that the IPC isn't a direct food security indicator but rather a systematic process, adhering to standardized procedures, wherein influential parties analyze and come to a consensus regarding the intensity and persistence of food and nutrition insecurity within a country at a specific point in time. This consensus-building process operates within the IPC technical working groups. In practical terms, typically during emergency situations, the host Government convenes the country's IPC technical working group, comprising government representatives, international organizations, NGOs, and civil society. This group assesses the food security and nutrition situation by analyzing existing available information.

IPC was initiated as a global partnership initiative to equip policymakers with an overarching classification of the status of food security and nutrition in the country, endorsed by key stakeholders. The primary objective is to provide actionable knowledge for immediate intervention during emergency scenarios. In contexts facing rapidly deteriorating food security, there's often insufficient time to conduct specific food security or needs assessments. Swift action is imperative, making it crucial that these actions are informed by the most current available information and backed by major stakeholders. IPC precisely facilitates this consultative process, enabling the consolidation of available information through predefined analysis protocols.

In principle, an IPC/CH process should consider all relevant time-sensitive information available for the area under assessment. While maintaining an acceptable level of reliability is essential, the emphasis is on timeliness and relevance, rather than statistical properties of the indicators used or their potential to generate cross-country comparable estimates. The set of information upon which the IPC country technical working group bases its agreement is outlined in the predefined protocols, which vary according to the IPC scales and the specific scope for which the IPC technical working group is assembled. The latest version of the IPC technical manual (IPC Global Partners, 2021) describes three IPC scales:

- a. Acute food insecurity, focusing on "identifying areas with a significant proportion of households experiencing severe food energy shortages or livelihood changes that endanger lives or livelihoods";
- b. Chronic food insecurity, concentrating on "identifying areas with a substantial proportion of households with a long-term inability to meet essential food requirements in terms of both macro- and micronutrients";
- c. Acute malnutrition, with the objective of "identifying areas with a substantial proportion of children suffering from wasting or edema."

Each IPC scale involves distinct food security and malnutrition indicators, as well as different thresholds for classifying severity and identifying key drivers. The protocols are organized based on four functions: a) building technical consensus, b) classifying severity and identifying key drivers, c) communicating for action, and d) quality assurance, offering guidance for the activities that the technical working groups must follow.

IPC analyses are typically conducted during one- to two-week workshops, culminating in the development of a report by the technical working group. The overarching concept of IPC scales is to classify food security or malnutrition by consolidating information from various indicators collected from multiple sources. Timeliness is crucial for this assessment, always relying on the most up-to-date data. However, this doesn't guarantee that secondary information is necessarily recent. In fact, IPC/CH does not encompass data collection activities. As a result, IPC/CH's timeliness depends on the available data. Information collected through nationally representative surveys is the preferred source, but these are costly and not conducted annually. Consequently, some countries have established systems of surveys with smaller samples to regularly assess food security and nutrition, providing the technical working group with updated key indicators. These food security assessments, led by countries, are typically managed by the country-level food security unit and the Ministry of Agriculture, with National Statistical Offices not always involved. Alternatively, IPC/CH technical working groups rely on food security assessments conducted by the World Food Programme (WFP), such as the Emergency Food Security Analysis (EFSA) and, less frequently, the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFPSVA). While these assessments provide valuable information for IPC/CH, they are generally not designed to monitor food security but rather to furnish actionable information for addressing emergency situations.

Advantages in using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale to inform IPC/CH assessments

The inclusion of the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) within IPC/CH assessments represents a significant improvement in three key areas. First, it enhances the capacity to provide disaggregated information, enabling more detailed analyses of food security at various levels, from individual characteristics (such as gender) to subnational

breakdowns, which was previously challenging with IPC's framework. Second, it introduces comparability over time and space by standardizing the FIES indicators across different populations, ensuring that results are consistent and can be compared at different levels, a dimension where IPC fell short due to variations in consensus-building processes. Lastly, the FIES excels in distinguishing between severity levels, providing a more accurate assessment of food insecurity's depth and allowing for more nuanced analyses (for example, to inform different IPC Phases). In summary, the incorporation of the FIES brings substantial improvements to IPC assessments, enabling more comprehensive, standardized, and granular analyses of food security and nutrition information.

Capacity to provide disaggregated information

The IPC aims to address the question of "where is the most immediate response needed." However, the reliability of this response is contingent on the nature of the indicators used to derive this information and the methodology employed for their analysis. Not all the indicators within the IPC framework exhibit additivity properties that ensure consistency in the results at various levels of disaggregation, such as regional or national breakdowns. Furthermore, the methods used to aggregate these diverse indicators may also introduce internal inconsistencies.

As the FIES or a comparable experience-based food security questionnaire is administered through surveys, the prevalence of food insecurity can be quantified within any population group for which the survey data is representative. If applied at the household level, it becomes possible to disaggregate the results based on household characteristics, including area of location, household income, composition (such as the presence and number of young children, members with disabilities, elderly members, etc.), as well as the gender, age, and education of the household head. On the other hand, when applied at the individual level, it allows for proper disaggregation of food insecurity prevalence by gender and other individual characteristics (such as age), as it enables the independent measurement of food insecurity among male and female members within the same population group. When producing disaggregated statistics, it's crucial to ensure the validity of the application by estimating the Rasch model with data from each specific subpopulation group and, if necessary, conducting the appropriate calibration of disaggregated measures to the total population before making comparisons.

In summary, the capacity to provide disaggregated information is closely linked to the properties of individual indicators. IPC/CH, which amalgamates indicators with and without additivity properties, cannot offer robust, statistically-based evidence at sub-national levels. The FIES methodology allows for results to be disaggregated at the subnational level, provided that the survey data is representative at the specific level for which estimates are needed, bringing in the IPC framework important additional information.

Comparability over time and space

The IPC analytical approach offers a consistent framework for evaluating food security and nutrition data across various locations, employing standardized protocols. However, this uniformity does not inherently yield comparable results. This lack of comparability arises from the fact that each application of the IPC is reliant on the specific information available in a given context at a particular moment. Furthermore, it is subject to a consensus-building process that inherently differs each time, making direct result comparisons unfeasible. While this limitation does not pose an issue when the primary aim is to inform time-sensitive decisions during emergencies, it becomes problematic when attempting to analyze medium or long-term food security trends using different IPC rounds.

The FIES was meticulously developed to introduce an comparability feature to existing experience-based scale methodologies. To ensure the comparability of FIES indicators across diverse populations, universal thresholds are established on the FIES global reference scale. These thresholds are then translated into equivalent values on the "local" scales through the application of the Rasch model to specific populations, a process known as "equating." Equating acts as a metric standardization method, relying on the identification of a subset of items that are considered common between the global FIES and the specific measurement scale applied in each context. The severity levels associated with these common items serve as anchor points for adjusting the global FIES thresholds to align with the local scales. This standardization procedure guarantees that the mean and standard deviation of the set of common items remain consistent, whether measured on the global FIES or a national scale. Ensuring compatibility with the global FIES and the ability to compile this indicator necessitates identifying at least four of the eight FIES items as common.

Specifically, data gathered using the FIES survey module or other experience-based food security scales from a representative sample of a specific population can be employed to estimate the distribution of households or individuals within that population based on different levels of severity. Following rigorous statistical validation to ensure that the collected data meets the essential criteria for consistent measurement of an underlying latent trait, FIES scores are computed from the affirmative or negative responses given to eight specific questions. These scores are then utilized to assign a likelihood to each case, indicating its potential classification on a food security severity scale, which encompasses mild, moderate, and severe categories.

To achieve consistency in classification, all metrics are aligned with a global reference scale that defines thresholds. For global food security monitoring, in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), FAO has established a reference scale and two distinct thresholds. These thresholds are designed to distinguish mild from moderate and moderate from severe levels of food security for data collected with a 12-month recall period. The percentage of households classified as having experienced moderate or severe conditions is considered an estimate of the prevalence of food insecurity, and this information is instrumental for SDG monitoring. It's worth noting that these reference scales and thresholds are utilized in the IPC Chronic Food Insecurity analyses.

For the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Reference Table, a separate reference scale and different thresholds have been developed. These are specifically tailored for data collected with a 30-day recall period, which is more suited to capturing acute food insecurity. The cut-off points currently used for the latter reference scales have been established through validation analyses conducted by FAO using FIES datasets from 22 countries in 2020 and reported the IPC guidance note on indicators².

In essence, the IPC/CH frameworks are inherently designed not to produce estimates that can be compared across countries or even within the same country during different applications. While this limitation is not particularly significant when the objective is to support crisis response efforts, it is important to acknowledge why this tool is generally unsuitable for monitoring a country's food security situation over time. In this context, the FIES brings to IPC/CH assessments comparable estimates, adding an essential dimension of international comparability to food security analysis.

Capacity to distinguish between severity levels

The objective of the IPC/CH framework is to "classify the severity and magnitude and to identify key drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition." However, this goal presents several challenges, two of which are particularly difficult to address. First, not all the indicators within the IPC scales are inherently designed to differentiate between various levels of food security. For instance, the "dietary energy intake" indicator in the IPC acute scale lacks the capacity to discern such distinctions, rendering any classifications of food insecurity severity based on it inaccurate. Secondly, even assuming that all the indicators within the IPC scales can be utilized to distinguish between different food security levels, aligning the thresholds for food security classes across all these indicators is exceptionally challenging. This arises from the fact that while thresholds are essentially conventions and consistent thresholds are essential for providing generic labels with a common meaning and ensuring result comparability, the IPC scales encompass numerous indicators, each requiring specific thresholds for each food security class. This leads to the core issue – how to ensure that the thresholds established for two different indicators to differentiate, for example, between phase three and phase four of the IPC acute food insecurity scale, are truly equivalent. To what extent, for instance, do values 3 and 4 of the Household Dietary Diversity Score, and values 2 and 3 of the Household Hunger Score indicators, accurately identify the same population group classified as phase three? This question is highly complex and requires an in-depth analysis.

The FIES methodology allows for estimations at various levels of severity. For global monitoring purposes, FAO employs two distinct thresholds to identify the lower bounds of "moderate" and "severe" levels of food insecurity. These values pertain to estimates of the population proportion that experienced food insecurity at moderate or severe (FI_{mod+sev}) and severe (FI_{sev}) levels over the reference year, respectively. The group experiencing moderate or severe levels of food insecurity encompasses those who have encountered severe food insecurity levels as well. The rationale behind not using the percentage of those experiencing moderate food insecurity alone as a global monitoring indicator is to prevent potentially ambiguous interpretations; a reduction in the percentage of

² www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Guidance_Note_on_Indicators.pdf . This analysis is currently under update including a larger number of countries, spanning more geographical regions and years of data collection.

moderate food insecurity might be due to some individuals moving from moderate to the "severe" category. Combining the moderate and severe food insecurity categories mitigates this ambiguity. A new recently established protocol of FAO, relying on FIES data collected with a 30-days recall period, and adopted by IPC within the context of the AFI protocol, also allows to classify households among the different IPC phases using cut-off thresholds derived based on a validation study and based on equivalent cut-offs as those implemented for the HHS.

In conclusion, the IPC/CH frameworks lacks a robust statistical foundation to provide dependable estimates at various food severity levels. This limitation is understandable when the goal is to facilitate rapid interventions based on available information, especially in situations where other surveys cannot be conducted. Nonetheless, it is unsuitable for monitoring the severity of food insecurity. The FIES offers IPC/CH classifications a reference indicator to better discern among different severity levels, thus to guide analysts in better classifying population groups during analysis workshops.

Existing limitations and challenges

Currently, data on FIES, particularly on FIES with a 30-days recall period, is not regularly available on samples that are representative of the population at national and sub-national levels. However, data availability is expected to improve in the near future due to more detailed reporting requirements of countries and the fact that FIES is being increasingly incorporated in recent food security assessments. In this respect, there is the strong need to advocate for the inclusion of the FIES-SM, including the 30-days recall period, in assessments specifically and indirectly designed to inform IPC and CH, as well as to collect primary information with a sufficiently large and representative sample allowing for disaggregation of the estimates.

One of the key features of FIES-based indicators is that they are defined at the area level, rather than the household level. However, separate analyses can be conducted on households grouped by some of their relevant characteristics. For example, researchers can examine the FIES-based prevalence of food insecurity among the potentially worst-off households, such as those with high food consumption gaps or livelihood changes, compared to moderate or better-off households with lower food consumption gaps. This type of analysis can provide valuable insights into the distribution of food insecurity within a population and help identify vulnerable groups that may require targeted interventions. Additionally, FIES data can be used to estimate the probability that a household belongs to any of the defined food insecurity classes." This information can be used to inform policy decisions and resource allocation. Overall, while FIES-based indicators are defined at the area level, they can still provide valuable information on the distribution of food insecurity within a population and help identify vulnerable groups that require targeted interventions.

Another challenge in using FIES-based measures is the complex analysis required to statistically validate the data. This analysis requires a high level of competence in Item Response Theory and the use of related statistical packages. As a result, country teams that are incorporating FIES in their surveys are advised to contact FAO for assistance with data analysis. FAO can provide technical support and guidance on how to analyze FIES data and integrate it with other IPC indicators to gain a more comprehensive understanding of food security and acute malnutrition, pointing the user to the most appropriate software and documentation resources. By working with FAO, country teams can ensure that their FIES-based measures are accurate and reliable, which is essential for making informed policy decisions and resource allocation. Overall, while the complex analysis required to validate FIES-based measures may be a limitation, working with FAO can help ensure that the data is analyzed correctly and that the results are meaningful and actionable.

Finally, one important aspect to consider when using FIES data for IPC acute food insecurity classifications is the cut-offs used to define the different levels of food insecurity. The proposed cut-offs for the AFI protocol are based on validation analysis conducted by FAO on FIES datasets from 22 countries in 2020. As more data becomes available, the 30-days referenced FIESglobal scale and cut-offs are in the process of being revised. As such, it is important to continue to monitor and analyze FIES data to ensure that the cut-offs used for IPC acute food insecurity classifications are accurate and up-to-date. By doing so, we can ensure that policy decisions and resource allocation are based on the most reliable and relevant data available, which is essential for addressing food insecurity and malnutrition around the world.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) is a comprehensive measurement system designed to evaluate the severity of food insecurity among households or individuals. It comprises three key components: a survey module for collecting data through a set of eight core questions, an analytical protocol to convert this data into a probabilistic measure of food insecurity, and a reference scale to ensure comparability. The FIES-SM gathers information through dichotomous yes/no responses, generating data for measuring various levels of food insecurity, and it is adaptable for assessing food insecurity over different time frames, including the past year, past 30 days, or both.

The integration of the FIES into food security assessments, including the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) and the Cadre Harmonisé (CH), offers several advantages. First, it significantly enhances the capacity to provide disaggregated information, allowing for more detailed analyses of food security at various levels, from individual characteristics to subnational breakdowns. This improvement in granularity is instrumental for a more precise understanding of food insecurity dynamics. Second, the FIES introduces comparability over time and across different regions, a dimension where the IPC had previously encountered challenges due to the variability in consensus-building processes. Lastly, the FIES excels in distinguishing between severity levels of food insecurity, providing a more accurate assessment of the depth of the problem and enabling more nuanced analyses. In essence, the FIES brings substantial enhancements to IPC assessments, enabling more comprehensive, standardized, and granular analyses of food security and nutrition data.

However, certain limitations and challenges exist in the utilization of FIES data. Notably, data on FIES, particularly with a 30-day recall period, is not consistently available at national and sub-national levels. Efforts to advocate for the inclusion of the FIES-SM in assessments specifically designed to inform IPC and CH, coupled with representative sample collection, are essential to address this limitation. Another consideration is that FIES-based indicators are defined at the area level rather than the household level. While separate analyses can be conducted to examine food insecurity among different household characteristics, the focus on area-level data may be a limitation for some applications.

Additionally, analyzing FIES-based measures involves complex statistical validation, requiring a high level of expertise in Item Response Theory and related statistical methods. Collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is recommended to ensure the data is accurately analyzed and integrated with other IPC indicators.

Furthermore, defining the cut-offs used to classify different levels of food insecurity in IPC acute food insecurity assessments is an ongoing challenge. These cut-offs are based on validation analyses conducted by FAO on FIES datasets from various countries in 2020. As more data becomes available, the 30-days referenced FIESglobal scale and cut-offs are in the process of being revised. Therefore, ongoing monitoring and analysis of FIES data are critical to ensure that policy decisions and resource allocation are based on the most reliable and up-to-date information.

In conclusion, the integration of the Food Insecurity Experience Scale into food security assessments like IPC and CH brings valuable improvements in data granularity, comparability, and the ability to distinguish between severity levels. However, addressing limitations and challenges, such as data availability, area-level focus, and complex statistical analysis, is essential to maximize the potential of FIES in informing food security and malnutrition policies and interventions on a global scale.

4. REFERENCES

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