South Sudan

Operational Strategy for

Food and Nutrition Security Information Systems Capacity Development

FSNIN South Sudan Partners:

FAO, FEWS NET, UNICEF and WFP

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FEWS NET
FAMINE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS NETWORK

unicef

WFP World Food Programme
wfp.org

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Acronyms

ACF	Action contre la Faim
AFIS	Agriculture and Food Security Information System
CAMP	Comprehensive Agricultural Master Plan
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSI	Coping Strategies Index
EW	Early Warning
EW TWG	National Inter-Governmental Early Warning Technical Working Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FNS	Food and Nutrition Security
FSC	Food Security Council
FSIN	Food Security Information Network
FSNMS	Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System
FSTS	Food Security Technical Secretariat
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
GIS	Geographic Information System
GSU	Global Support Unit
GRSS	Government of the Republic of South Sudan
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HFS	High Frequency Survey
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDDRISI/IGAD	Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority for Development
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
ISFNS	Information Systems for Food and Nutrition Security
JRC/EC	European Commission Joint Research Centre
MoAFCRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Cooperative, and Rural Development
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoHADM	Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics

NIWG	Nutrition Information Working Group
NDVI	Normalized Difference Vegetation Index
RAU	Resilience Analysis Unit
RFE	Rainfall Estimation
RIMA	Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis
RRC	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
RRP	Regional Response Plan
RSSFSC	Republic of South Sudan Food Security Council
SC	Scenario Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
TSC	Technical Steering Committee
TWGs	Thematic Working Groups
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WRSI	Water Requirement Satisfaction Index

Executive Summary

The humanitarian crisis and need for resilience/development planning of South Sudan illustrates a strong demand for major actions to address Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) challenges by supporting evidence-based analysis, decision-making processes and programming.

Building up on previous work (Food Security and Nutrition Information Systems Mapping and Capacity Assessment) done by the Food Security Information Network (FSIN) in the country in 2013, FAO, FEWS NET and WFP decided to institute a formal partnership under the FSIN framework and develop a coordinated plan of action to boost availability of data, promote harmonization of Information Systems for Food and Nutrition Security and where applicable, related capacity development efforts for local institutions. The present joint Operational Strategy, the related workplan and the letter of intent formalize this collaboration.

The Strategy outlines **two overall key objectives**:

1. **Improving alignment and effectiveness of individual agencies' food security and nutrition information in order to create robust and resilient information systems sustainable in the long term;**
2. **Supporting capacity development activities for local institutions involved in food security and nutrition information systems through a unified and coordinated approach.**

These objectives will be pursued by implementing coordinated actions under five proposed priority areas (see below). An extensive and detailed review of existing data streams has pinpointed the need of **addressing the identified data gaps and improving the quality of specific data streams** in order to advance in the following key areas to be prioritized under this Operational Strategy:

1. **Enhance IPC analysis processes and technical quality;**
2. **Strengthen early warning analysis and reporting capacity;**
3. **Strengthen information for resilience building programming efforts.**

As **long-term areas of work**, provided that the political and economic enabling environment allow, the following areas are proposed to be addressed through coordinated efforts between the three agencies:

4. **Facilitate mechanisms for open data and information sharing;**
5. **Ensuring Institutional coordination on Food Security and Nutrition.**

Short-term and medium to long-term actions are proposed to operationalise the five priority areas for each relevant food security and nutrition information system.

The present operational strategy and related work-plan (see Annex1) proposes to address short-term needs and actions that are to be implemented through current programmes i.e. WFP VAM, FAO AFIS and FEWS NET assuming funding is available until December 2016. Long-term actions aimed at the institutionalization of FSN information systems are pending resourcing for activities at national and state level. The coordinated efforts of the three agencies are formalized under a Letter of Intent (Annex 2) which is considered open ended. Considering that UNICEF is a key actor involved in food security and nutrition information and it has a critical role in all matters pertaining to Nutrition information systems and analysis, the three partite parternership agreement has included UNICEF as an equal signatory partner responsible for the implementation of this Operational Strategy.

I. Introduction

The Food Security Information Network (FSIN) is a global initiative co-sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) of the United Nations, and by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). It aims at enabling countries to build sustainable Information Systems for Food and Nutrition Security (ISFNS), and strengthening national and regional institutions' capacities to manage these systems and thereby support evidence based decision-making.

Against this background, FAO, WFP and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) have agreed to work together under the FSIN framework to promote evidence-based decision-making for improved Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) policies and programmes by improving information systems and strengthening capacities of national networks, including all relevant core actors to undertake credible, relevant and timely assessments and analysis.

In South Sudan, information is a priority for all stakeholders as the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) is currently unable to produce such public goods without external support. This lack of data is anticipated to continue for some years as a consequence of the GRSS fiscal and institutional crises. Meanwhile, the humanitarian crisis and need for emergency assistance as well as resilience/development planning of South Sudan illustrates a strong demand for major actions to address FNS challenges by supporting evidence-based FNS analysis, decision-making processes and programming.

In 2013, WFP and FAO under the FSIN framework undertook an in-depth capacity assessment and mapping exercise of food security and nutrition information systems in South Sudan. The assessment found that various systems and collaboration platforms existed, with relevant gaps in terms of coverage in data collection, as well as coordination and harmonization of approaches among key actors, and finally in terms of information flow and dissemination for timely decision-making. In June 2015, FAO, FEWS NET and WFP agreed that a formal arrangement for collaboration would add value in sustaining already existing efforts and addressing related challenges.

In the short term, and in light of the current crisis, this partnership-based arrangement would focus on **coordinating actions to improve assessment of humanitarian needs and inform response**. At the same time, considering the importance of bridging humanitarian and development interventions, **informing the resilience programming framework** is also a priority to be operationalized under the present partnership. National and sub-national GRSS institutions will continue to be involved and supported as appropriate.

In the long term, provided that an improved political and economic enabling environment will materialize, the initiative would also facilitate the structural development of GRSS food security and nutrition institutions. This includes enabling their leadership role and coordination functions for the **progressive institutionalization of information systems** and enhancing their technical capacities to effectively manage food and nutrition security information.

With specific regard to capacity building in the short-tem, besides GRSS actors there is a need to engage UN and NGO partners to build **resilient information systems**. The operational strategy encompasses joint data production, analysis and dissemination, and related capacity building that:

- Maintains a set of data streams and analyses fully relevant to address the current demand;
- Can promptly respond to sudden onset crises and related information needs;
- Can operate in all geographical and thematic areas regardless to the GRSS institutions' functionality;

- Can increase the information systems' capacity at de-centralized level through the involvement of NGO/projects besides GRSS institutions for:
    i. Enhanced data availability;
    ii. Enhanced analytical capacity.

It was agreed that the tripartite collaboration under the FSIN umbrella – is to be enlarged to include the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) as an equal partner under the framework for this arrangement. The inclusion of UNICEF as key partner in terms of Nutrition related matters will improve linkages for food security and nutrition information as the Nutrition Cluster leader. The primary aim is to ensure nutrition data collected properly interphase with food security analysis (e.g. IPC).

Against this background, given the complexity of the challenge, a multi-stakeholder partnership is indeed considered as the best way forward. The formalization of this collaboration is provided by the development of this joint Operational Strategy, its related work-plan, and signature of a Letter of Intent.

The present document is therefore the cumulative result of a process and related efforts started in 2013. It aims at identifying opportunities to design coordinated interventions in South Sudan with the following two key overall objectives:

1. **Improving alignment and effectiveness of individual agencies' food security and nutrition information in order to create robust and resilient information systems sustainable in the long term;**
2. **Supporting capacity development activities for local institutions involved in food security and nutrition information systems through a unified and coordinated approach.**

II.   Existing institutional set up, coordination mechanisms, and policy frameworks

The food security situation in South Sudan has been inadequate for decades particularly due to the independence-related conflict and the lack of development. With the signing of the peace agreement in 2005 and the independence from Sudan in 2011, there were great expectations about substantial improvement in the food security situation in the country. Unfortunately, this is being seriously impacted by the consequences of the current civil conflict, which erupted in December 2013, including the on-going economic deterioration throughout the country, resulting in a dramatic widespread escalation of food insecurity.

Given the current situation, there is increased demand to monitoring the deteriorating food security situation and analysing the humanitarian needs of the country by the GRSS and the international community. Effective and coordinated humanitarian assessments, agencies' coordination, efficient institutional set up, and coordination mechanisms have then become crucial issues in order to properly inform humanitarian response to address food insecurity in a context of declining aid resources and GRSS fiscal capacity. In addition, increased attention is to be given to effective policy and development planning that can effectively bridge humanitarian and devevelopment efforts through a robust resilience building framework.

2.1 Institutional set up and coordination mechanisms on Food and Nutrition Security

2.1.1 Food Security Council

The Republic of South Sudan Food Security Council (RSSFSC) was established by Presidential Decree in October 2008 with the mandate to ensure the overall alignment and harmonization of food security initiatives of the various line ministries and commissions, and to provide guidance for national food security policies and programmes. The role of the FSC has indeed been evolving and it is increasingly perceived as a potential platform for enhanced coordination and fostering linkages among the nine ministries that deal with various aspects of food security. The FSC has an institutional structure that consists of three bodies: the **Council**, the **General Secretariat**, and the **Technical Steering Committee**.

Members of the Council are drawn from ministries that have a role in food security related issues. The chairperson of the Council is the President of the Republic of South Sudan while the Secretary of the Council is the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Cooperatives and Rural Development.

The Council has power and mandate as the highest decision-making body for food security policies and related initiatives in the Republic of South Sudan. The Secretariat has the role to support, coordinate, document and compile information and policy briefs to be provided to the Council.

The General Secretariat is supposed to receive information from the Food Security Technical Secretariat (FSTS). The FSTS is the technical arm of the RSSFSC and is housed at the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The FSTS is the national centre for food security information compilation and analysis, whose role is to provide evidence to support policy and planning decisions by the RSSFSC on food security related issues.

The **Technical Steering Committee (TSC)** brings together various stakeholders, comprising the Government institutions already represented on the Council as well as non-governmental actors and international organisations that carry out food and nutrition security activities. The main function of TSC is to assist the General Secretariat by articulating a national strategic framework required for promoting and coordinating FNS activities.

2.1.2 Humanitarian coordination bodies

The **Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MoHADM)**, created in June 2010, is responsible for leading and coordinating emergency assistance and disaster management. It is assisted by the **Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC)** for what concerns operational matters. The Ministry is structured includes the Disaster and Emergency Preparedness unit, the Planning and Coordination and the **National Inter-Governmental Early Warning Technical Working Group (EW TWG)** which is a monthly forum producing EW bulletins.

The latter represents the most important attempt of the Government in terms of enhancing South Sudan early warning capacities to prevent, mitigate, predict and respond to disasters. The EW TWG was established in December 2014 with the very objective of coordinating the dissemination of reliable information on natural and man-made hazards forecasting, early warning on weather conditions and climate scenarios to policy makers and to communities at risk. Staff in the EW TWG has been seconded from both the MoHA and the RRC. WFP has also been contributing to the EW TWG work by seconding two staff members.

An Early Warning Technical Working Group has been established with the objective of disseminating reliable information on hazards forecasting, early warning weather and climate scenarios to at risk communities. It is formed by three staff seconded respectively by the MoHA and the RRS, including the

respective directors of the two bodies. In addition, WFP seconds two staff members to the Working Group.

Five thematic Working Groups – namely on food security and livelihoods; wheatear and climate; livestock and fisheries; health and nutrition; population movement and displacement – provide related key information to the EW TWG to be analysed and compiled into a *monthly bulletin* that contains an overview of early warning scenario key messages, background and sector early warning Indicators summaries. The main objective of having such product is to make key early warning information flow at all levels throughout the country. In addition, a **National Policy on Disaster Management** is being developed with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the secondment of a Policy Advisor to the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MoHADM).

The **Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)** decides on humanitarian strategies, policies and priorities, and it is chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator – who is also the Resident Coordinator and Deputy of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG). It includes the Head of UN agencies, Head of five elected NGOs, and representatives from the NGO Secretariat, the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), donors, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). The HCT is a strategic platform for information sharing and decision making, requiring and using IPC and other information produced by FAO, WFP and FEWS NET.

The HCT Juba adopted the **cluster system** in 2010 to strengthen and improve humanitarian coordination mechanisms, ensuring that coordination structures are up to the challenge of addressing the complex and pressing humanitarian situation in South Sudan.

As noted by the 2013 FSIN Capacity Assessment, evidence suggests that humanitarian clusters are the only significant fora both at national and state levels where food security information is validated and discussed among key stakeholders to support policy decisions.

> Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) Cluster
> The overarching priority for the cluster is to ensure and protect immediate access to food and prevent the collapse of livelihoods among the most vulnerable households. The cluster coordinates current and planned FSL interventions, and disseminates FSL information to partners. It strengthens preparedness and response to food security and livelihood emergencies, while promoting capacity-building of FSL partners. The cluster also helps crisis-affected communities to rebound as quickly as possible while protecting livelihood systems in areas that are indirectly affected by the crisis. A high percentage of people in acute and emergency food insecurity require multi-faceted support in collaboration with other clusters. As a matter of fact, the FSL cluster also works closely with the Nutrition, Health, WASH and Protection ones in planning and organizing assessments and sharing information on sector activities/interventions. The FSL Cluster is a sectoral platform for information sharing and decision making, requiring and using IPC and other information produced by FAO, WFP and FEWS NET.

> Nutrition Cluster
> The Nutrition Cluster aims to ensure coherent, strategic and effective emergency nutrition responses, working with national and international partners on agreed priorities, including preventing acute malnutrition in children under five years, pregnant and lactating women, and other vulnerable groups. The Cluster focuses on coordination, capacity building, emergency preparedness, assessment and response, and improving coverage of emergency nutrition programs. The Nutrition Cluster Information Working Group is the key platform for FSIN partners' engagement and coordination.

The **Inter-Cluster Working Group (ICWG)** is responsible for enacting the strategy set out by the HCT, ensuring effective coordination between clusters, including on crosscutting issues such as mainstreaming protection, gender considerations, etc. The ICWG is also responsible for advising the HCT on operational matters and providing guidance to responding agencies on geographical priorities. Cluster leads and co-leads are then responsible for coordinating the operations of their cluster members.

2.2 Policy and programming frameworks

2.2.1 Agricultural development

The GRSS has formulated the **Comprehensive Agricultural Master Plan (CAMP)** for the development of the Nation to address hunger and food insecurity, to improve rural livelihoods and generate income, and to diversify the economy through a modernized and comprehensive agricultural sector. The plan covers a 25-year timeframe and includes two FSIN-relevant projects: Food security and emergency preparedness, and National agriculture information system development. Improvements in agricultural production and productivity are to be achieved across four agricultural subsectors examined by CAMP – namely crops, livestock, forestry, and fisheries - and the institutional development sector. It is critical for the Government to work with all development partners towards the implementation of the components of the projects profiles produced by CAMP to guide investment and progress towards the agricultural transformation.

2.2.2 Humanitarian Response Plan

The Humanitarian Country Team develops yearly South Sudan Humanitarian Appeals that are aimed at addressing life-threatening needs in key parts of the country. The analysis provided by IPC is critical in the development of such Plans. The Humanitarian Response Plan for 2015 outlines three strategic response objectives, two of which are specifically relevant to the present Operational Strategy:

- **Strategic Objective 1:** *Save lives and alleviate suffering by providing multi-sector assistance to people in need* – which aims to mitigate the threat of the key killers related to food insecurity, disease, and poor living conditions capacities of people in need;
- **Strategic Objective 3:** *Improve self-reliance and coping capacities of people in need by protecting, restoring and promoting their livelihoods* – which includes activities that address the needs of people whose food security is stressed and at risk of deteriorating, by strengthening agriculture, livestock, and fisheries.

In order to ensure effectiveness of aid operations in addressing humanitarian needs, the FSIN Operational Strategy provides act as an overcharging framework for agencies collaboration to strengthen capacities of humanitarian and local institutions to conduct humanitarian needs assessments and better inform timely responses.

2.2.3 Resilience programming

Currently, the development agenda has been increasingly frozen, including the UNDAF, the resilience agenda (with a particular focus on food security) is gaining importance both within the GRSS and among the Development Partners to promote the necessary linkages between humanitarian and development efforts. Unlike IPC, the resilience agenda currently lacks an institutional platform. Against a background of recurrent crises, there is a growing recognition in South Sudan that understanding programmes and policies priorities to be implemented and/or strengthened to enhance the resilience of people and communities is of critical importance. Efforts are being made by the Government – i.e., Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MoAFCRD) and NBS – to enhance **evidence-based resilience**

programming. Support to this end is being given by Resilience Analysis Unit (RAU) under the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD), in collaboration with UN Agencies – i.e., FAO, UNICEF, UNDP, and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), UN Women, WFP – and International Institutions – i.e., World Bank (WB), FEWS NET. Building resilience requires a multi-sector approach and a long-term commitment to flexible programming aimed at reducing the risk and strengthening capacities. It also requires a partnership approach to the development of a common resilience building agenda.

Resilience agenda and related institutional platform: Resilience analysis is a relatively new concept in South Sudan now increasingly gaining political recognition and if properly implemented it could be a way to overcome the current divide between humanitarian and development efforts. *Improved knowledge* on resilience analysis can contribute to current policy and programming related efforts. A **Resilience Technical Working Group** has been established to coordinate the current analytical efforts and programming efforts.

III.   Food and Nutrition Security Information Systems: gaps, challenges and way forward

This section firstly presents main challenges and issues identified for each key food security and nutrition information systems supported by WFP, FAO, FEWSNET and UNICEF; secondly, it provides key actions to address the identified challenges.

Based on the analysis of strengths and weaknesses of food security and nutrition information systems and the related datasets, the present strategy proposes to focus on **addressing the identified data gaps and improving the quality of specific data streams** critical in achieving the proposed goals under the following key priority areas:

1. **Enhance IPC analysis processes and technical quality;**
2. **Strengthen information for resilience building programming efforts;**
3. **Strengthen early warning analysis and reporting capacity.**

According to those areas, the following actions are proposed to be implemented for each sectorial information that feeds into food security and nutrition analysis of the IPC, resilience-relevant information, and early warning information.

3.1. Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)

3.1.1 Data and info management

The IPC[1] was introduced in South Sudan in 2007 and used since 2008 to classify the food security situation. FSIN partners lead the acute analysis four times a year, at the national and state levels. Data collected at state level is then discussed and validated before feeding into the national IPC analysis. Main data streams used in the IPC analysis are the FSNMS, Crop assessments and CFSAM, livestock and crop market prices as well as Terms of Trade and cross-border trade, Early Warning bulletins, climate information, nutrition surveys, mortality information albeit very limited, humanitarian

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[1] IPC global partners are: WFP; FAO; ACF International; CARE; CILSS; FEWS NET; FSCL; JRC; Oxfam; Save the Children; SICA.

assistance and population displacement, among others datasets. All partners provide data according to their area of interest, expertise, and capacities.

3.1.2 Capacity building

The IPC version 1 was introduced in 2012 and to-date, over 120 persons have been trained on IPC protocols in the ten states, improving their overall knowledge on food security and nutrition. The IPC is fully institutionalized and adopted by the Government as a reliable tool for early warning and decision-making. FAO, WFP, Government and other humanitarian NGOs use IPC products regularly for response analysis and coordination. IPC is hosted within the National Bureau of Statistics and the chair of the technical working group (TWG) is in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Cooperatives and Rural Development. The national TWG is composed of 15 members from different ministries of the government, UN agencies and NGOs. At state level, there is one IPC Focal Point within the MoAFCRD in each state.

3.1.3 Main challenges in the analysis process and technical quality

1. **Analysis Process concern –** IPC is the main analytical tool for food security analysis in the country. It is fully institutionalized within the GRSS with full endorsement of every IPC analysis. However, the analysis process can be enhanced by continued capacity building particularly given the high numbers of stakeholders participating in the process and the related capacity constraints in conducting the analysis. A training and certification programme is ongoing for Level 1 and 2, led by the FSIN partners.
2. **Data quality and data gaps –** IPC analysis heavily depends on the specific data streams summarized in the below section. Therefore, the identified gaps in specific data streams are translated in data gaps for IPC analysis. Therefore, the quality of the analysis can increased by improving the data availability and filling data and quality gaps via IPC partners, line Ministries, and National Bureau of statistics.
3. **IPC compatible products –** FEWS NET food security reports (with compatible IPC classifications) are issued which sometimes do not necessarily mirror the IPC analysis and related results. This has often led to tensions among IPC TWG members, in particular GRSS, as well as confusion in understanding by general public having access to both types of reports;
4. **Lack of agreed method for outlook projections –** In the South Sudan context, it is of fundamental importance to provide projections of food security analysis beyond the standard IPC analysis projections of 3 months. Therefore, it is a recognized need to systematically include Scenario Development (SD) analysis that provides projections of 6 months and beyond. IPC participants should be further exposed to and trained in the FEWS NET approach to SD;
5. **Poor IPC awareness at decision maker level –** The scope and the objective of IPC are not always clear to decision makers creating greater expectations on the use of IPC with related risks of miss-using IPC for decision.
6. **Impact of Humanitarian Assistance –** given the humanitarian nature of the context and the level of assistance provided by international partners, it is important to more accurately incorporate the impact of Humanitarian Assistance on IPC Phase Classifications.
7. **Nutrition analysis –** The nutrition component is not yet well recognized. Nutrition partners have been participating throughout the exercise. However, due to absence of IPC nutrition tools/guides, role of nutrition participants has been limited to analysing the nutrition situation using only nutrition survey results.

3.1.4 Way forward to improve the analysis process and technical quality

Short term

1. **Analysis Process –** Undertake the light and full IPC Quality Control review with the support of the Global Support Unit (GSU) to better understand the quality of the analytical process and of the datasets feeding into the analysis. According to the results, tailored training will be provided and data improvements will be recommended. Also, step up of IPC training Level 1 to enhance capacities as well as conduct IPC Level-2 training to increase the number of certified IPC experts. In addition, to enhance technical quality of the analysis, a special study is proposed given the technical inconsistencies in the correlation between the Food Consumption Score (FCS) and the Coping Strategies Index (CSI) in Western Equatoria and Warrap states. FAO and WFP are urged to undertake two technical studies to understand the underlying causes of food insecurity in order to make the IPC and FSNSM analysis robust and help the differentiation between chronic and acute food insecurity.

2. **Data quality and gaps –** Addressing the identified gaps and improvement in the quality of specific data streams will result in the overall improvement of the IPC product quality. These improvements refer to the specific data streams reported in the specific sections (e.g. markets data, FSNMS, crop, rainfall, nutrition, and livestock).

3. **IPC compatible products –** When technical concerns lead to disagreements in the production of the final IPC output, such concerns and disagreements need to be properly articulated and documented according to the provisions set out in the IPC protocols. In addition, it is proposed that agencies reach an agreement on the timing of the products so as to avoid overlaps. As per recent agreement with the FSC SG, FEWS NET is expected to submit their reports to the IPC TWG for validation prior to publication.

4. **Scenario Development (SD) –** All partners recognize the importance of longer-term projections and therefore the inclusion of SD in IPC analysis. Partners agreed that FEWS NET SD approach will be adapted to South Sudan context where livelihoods baselines are not available, then followed by a training on SD and integration into the IPC process for South Sudan.

5. **Awareness raising –** Partners agreed to raise IPC awareness through specific events and activities including the preparation of a communication brief for high-level decision makers that explain the scope, objectives, and value addition of IPC and related complementarities with other information flows. Materials for Awareness Raising Events have been produced by GSU and should be accessed from them used for this purpose.

6. **Strengthen analysis of impact of Humanitarian Assistance –** Partners agreed to support the methodological development and contextualization of the method piloted by FEWS NET to more accurately incorporate the impact of Humanitarian Assistance on IPC Phase Classifications.

7. **Nutrition component –** in order to have nutrition analysis and projection beyond only SMART survey results, GSU is required to produce work sheet / forms to guide comprehensive analysis of nutrition situation. This includes working summary sheet for nutrition survey, food consumption, morbidity, hygiene and sanitation, feeding practices and other nutrition related information. Discussions with GSU on the matter are required.

Long-term - FSIN partners commit to:

1. Improve SD applications and livelihoods analysis, partners agreed to update livelihoods profiles baselines;
2. Ensure sustainability in terms of government leadership and coordination of the process as well as the resourcing of IPC workshops at state and national levels.

3.2 Prices, markets and trade data collection and analysis

FAO, WFP and FEWSNET in partnership with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and MoAFCRD have been working on Market Information Systems (MIS).

3.2.1 Data management

FAO, in the framework of the AFIS project, has:

- Developed a market analysis tool for easy analysis and presentation of data including terms of trade;
- Developed an SMS-enabled mobile data collection application;
- Reactivated the CLIMIS portal at: www.climis-southsudan.org;
- Through a system of local partners, weekly prices and supply levels are collected in 44 markets on 66 commodities[2].

FEWSNET conducts irregular cross border market monitoring (e.g. border with Uganda and Sudan) collecting data on volume of commodities and flow directions, as well as sources and destination prices. It produces a monthly price update for the main markets.

The WFP market price monitoring system covers a total of 35 markets in different states. Data collection is carried out on a weekly basis and bulletins are produced each month. They also include a food security outlook. A pilot approach is being explored by WFP on data collection using tablets and dissemination by mobile SMSs, currently covering 17 of the 35 markets both at state and county levels.

3.2.2 Capacity Development

FAO carries out capacity building activities for partners' staff on price data collection, analysis and reporting as the AFIS-led MIS functions through a network of staff and partners including state/county level government focal points, NGO and UN Agency who collect weekly prices and supply levels in 44 markets on 66 commodities. An inter-stakeholder[3] Market Information System Working Group led by NBS/FSTS is expected to coordinate and enable delivery of market information – but is under-performing due to inadequate capacity and staffing.

WFP conducts Pilot trainings for government officials on market monitoring.

3.2.3 Main challenges in effective coordination and alignment of market information systems:

1. Duplication of monitoring: discrepancies in data collection methods are related to issues of timing and modalities in data collection resulting in differences in prices' reporting for same commodities; duplication of efforts in terms of same markets monitored by different partners and investments in data collection systems;;
2. Lack of a common database repository: two separate databases are managed by WFP and FAO (the latter jointly with FEWS NET);
3. Dissemination of reports on market analysis: monthly bulletins are produced by WFP and FEWS NET and there is a lack of harmonized timing for report circulation;
4. Lack of harmonized support to NBS and Ministry of Agriculture (state and national level) to enhance capacities in data collection and analysis;
5. Limited use of the cross border data from the FEWS NET managed monitors.

3.2.4 Way forward to strengthen coordination and alignment of market information systems:

In the **short term**, the existing systems will be maintained, but focus will be on ensuring harmonized data collection approaches and tools used, complementarity and added value of each of them. Tasks

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[2] Cereals, livestock, local/imported food, fuel/energy sources, labour rates etc
[3] National & State Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry, ; county; state; Inter-Agency Market Information System: FAO, FEWS NET, WFP, NPA, World Vision, IOM, CADA, TFCS, Solidarity, JDF, NRC, VSF, OXFAM, SSGID , AECI, ACTED, SCPD, HeRY –SS, Mercy Corps, JCI, NRDC, CARD, FSTS, SAMARITAN'S PURSE

are shared in terms of markets monitored; thematic studies and/or reports are produced according to agencies' comparative advantages.

In the **medium to long-term**, integrate the different systems into one single system with one leading agency. As a first step, WFP database to feed into web repository portal under CLiMIS led by FAO; as a second step to hand over the Crop and Livestock Market Information System (CLiMIS) to WFP and FEWS NET; finally this is to be in the long term streamlined within the NBS.

To achieve these goals, partners agreed to develop a framework to ensure harmonization of methodologies for data collection particularly in terms of field protocols (e.g. timing and coverage) and data storage. To this end, a Technical Working Group should be formed comprising one representative (preferably a market analyst) from each agency, whose terms of reference will be to ensure this framework is developed, agreed upon, and implemented.

This operational framework will ensure a harmonized approach to support Government capacities. Further actions to improve the markets and trade data streams include:

1. Establish an open source repository – e.g. FAO/AFIS CLiMIS web portal to be housed by NBS;
2. Where feasible and required, establish a pool of enumerators to monitor specific important markets of interest where national capacity is not viable
3. Develop a common work plan for training of enumerators and key focal points in analysis (possibly at National and State levels) and for local partners and NGOs;
4. FAO and WFP to consider secondment of an international expert as an option to support the design of a national MIS framework within the relevant line ministries (e.g. MoAFCRD; MoTC) and NBS, to clearly define roles and responsibilities as well as levels for data collection, analysis, and information flows between different levels (e.g. county to state to national).

The operationalization of these recommendations will be clearly articulated and implemented by the Technical Working Group.

3.3 Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring Systems (FSNMS)

3.3.1 Data and info management

The FSNMS provides and allows monitoring of trends and changes in key food security and nutrition indicators over time that are representative at national and state levels. Data is collected in March-April (post-harvest), July-August (lean season), and October-November (harvest), with related analysis and reporting within a month or less.

A major improvement achieved as of round 14 is the integration of anthropometric measurements to mainstream nutrition indicators in FSNMS.

FSNMS reports are the main source of information for the IPC analysis. The timing of reporting is well connected to the main IPC comprehensive analysis (April and Sept) and IPC updates (July and December). In addition, data feeds into other information systems and reports such as the FAO-led Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) and WFP-led ANLA. FSNMS are used for both short-term programming and long term plans.

3.3.2 Capacity Development

FSNMS is a collaborative effort led by WFP with the support of FAO, FEWS NET and UNICEF and the involvement of over 35 partners including the Ministries of Health and Agriculture, the NBS, a number of NGOs and community-based organizations, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

WFP organises Training of Trainers (ToT) before every FSNMS round for focal points at state level who are then responsible for enhancing the capacity of related local enumerators participating in data collection from the different partners. Both ToTs and round trainings are carried out in partnership between the leading partners WFP, FAO and UNICEF. The cost for the training has been covered by UNICEF and FAO. In addition, FAO supports efforts in capacity development through LoAs at state level (seven states covered) with the MoAFCRD.

3.3.3 Main challenges in ensuring collaboration and enhance data quality

1. Sustainability of data collection and quality of data. Given FSNMS is a key data stream; it needs to be maintained until NBS will produce a reliable and sustained stream of household indicators.
2. In conflict-affected states, access is a major challenge constraining the actual coverage.
3. Lack of a common data repository.
4. Mainstreaming the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System (FSNMS) within Government institutions for its management and implementation.

3.3.4 Way forward proposed to ensure collaboration and enhance data quality

In the **Short term**:

While it is important to acknowledge the steps taken so far and the related achievements in terms of collaboration between agencies in carrying out FSNMS surveys, the present strategy proposes the following actions to be undertaken:

1. Leading agencies and relevant partners to engage in discussions (regular scheduled meetings) on how to improve the current data collection and quality particularly to ensure concrete steps are agreed and followed to implement the surveys. More specifically:
   o Partners taking part in the surveys should ensure sustainable engagement of human resources available in a timely and systematic manner in every FSNMS round.
   o Strategize FSNMS rounds to seasonal food security changes. For instance, reducing the number to two national FSNMS with EW updates in between in order to ensure sustainability. This approach can ensure rounds are carried out at the beginning of the dry season and at the peak of the lean season to enable thorough understanding of food insecurity conditions during these times. Possibly, ad hoc assessments can be carried out on specific areas according to particular needs. This can reduce agencies' fatigue in terms of staff and funds and ensure sustainability. So far, such reduction in the number of FSNMS rounds has been impossible due to the imperative to closely monitor rapidly declining food insecurity across the country.
2. Establish a single database to access time series of FNS data to be placed in the short term within WFP, with the long-term aiming at institutionalizing it into NBS. The establishment of a single database/repository is instrumental to the development and implementation of an open data mechanism to enhance data sharing;

In the **medium to long term**:

3. Exploit opportunity to engage with NBS as part of the ongoing support provided by the WB to include FNS indicators in the High Frequency Survey (HFS) methodology. Enumerators should be trained accordingly. This would result in progressive institutionalization of the FSNMS method within the NBS.
4. Despite its current weaknesses, NBS is the right place to position the FSNMS. NBS should have the mandate to store data as well as contribute to their production providing methodological expertise (e.g. sampling) and enumerators. On the other hand, data analysis for policy advice should remain with the FSC/FSTS. Therefore, capacities for the two institutions should be supported accordingly and through coordinated efforts.

3.4 Crop and Harvest Assessments and Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) reports

3.4.1 Data and info management

Since 2014, 6 to 7 crop planting and harvest assessments are conducted by FAO and the GRSS Ministry of Agriculture following the seasonal calendar in the different agro-ecological zones (crop planting/crop harvesting assessments). This information feeds into the yearly CFSAM and IPCs. The joint FAO/WFP CFSAM missions, formally requested by MAFCRD, are undertaken between November and January in order to verify and consolidate the outcomes of the crop assessments carried out over the year.

In addition, food security information is consolidated by WFP from the FSNMS to provide an overall food and vulnerability analysis. The CFSAM reports are released between February and March every year, and are highly used in IPC analysis as well as to government and donors' policy and planning and UN agencies short and longer-term programming.

3.4.2 Capacity Development

CFSAM missions are conducted jointly by FAO and WFP as a response to a government request when there is a perceived agricultural production or overall food availability shortfall. Although existing data is usually used for these reports, for several years the CFSAM in South Sudan has provided crop production and food security estimates due to the lack of a Government data collection and analysis system. Since 2014, the situation has been evolving thanks to the support provided by FAO to the Ministry of Agriculture (MoAFCRD) in conducting field crop assessments. FAO provides practical hands-on exercise and on-the-job trainings to the MoAFCRD in data collection currently in seven states, in addition to major financial support and operational leadership..

3.4.3 Main challenges in quality crop assessments

1. The implementation of the methodological approach for crop yield estimates, including estimation of pasture availability for agro-pastoral livelihoods, using land cover maps, agro-meteorological data and remote sensing;
2. Accessibility, movement and logistics challenges. These are due to conflict and difficulties during the rainy season and poor road infrastructure.
3. Competing requirements on the agencies' and GRSS capacity with FSNMS; need to expand stand-alone crop assessment team capacity.

3.4.4 Way forward to improve the quality of crop and harvest assessments

Short term

1. Introduce remote sensing techniques in crop and pasture yield estimation. This would also improve coverage of areas that are currently difficult to access;
2. Exploit the opportunity of global and regional expertise able to apply remote sensing data already produced and provide related trainings to enable GRSS relevant units to undertake data management and analysis;
3. Establish a single database to access time series of crop assessment data. This is instrumental to achieve one open shared database;

Long term

1. Systematic operationalization of crop monitoring and yield forecasting approach based on Agromet/remote sensing data and information.
2. Assess GRSS absorbing capacities to identify dedicated staff within the MoA in order to ensure a stand-alone crop assessment team.

3.5 Agro-climate/Remote sensing

3.5.1 Data and info management

Agromet is a system led by FAO under the Agricultural Food Information System (AFIS) for climate and rainfall monitoring. The project regularly collects agro-meteorology data, in particular rainfall from 20+ rain gauges located throughout the country. Meteorological data is also automatically collected through five – out of seven installed - reporting weather stations that then flow into a website. The network of ground stations have been rehabilitated in 2014/15 by FAO with the support of the MoAFCRD and the Department of Meteorology. Rainfall data and remote sensing data are used for early warning bulletins and food security situation analysis in the IPC analysis and other forums, however to a limited extent.

Remote-sensing based Rainfall Estimation (RFE), Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), Water Requirement Satisfaction Index (WRSI), Geographic Information System (GIS) data are regularly produced by FEWSNET, WFP and FAO, are used in IPC analysis, and regularly published through seasonal monitors, crop watch, NEWTWG bulletins and food security updates.

3.5.2 Capacity Development

FAO through AFIS has been providing trainings in rainfall data collection for seasonal monitoring and early warning reporting. FAO and WFP are sponsoring GRSS staff participation to GHACOF.

3.5.3 Main challenges in systematic monitoring and reporting of agromet/rainfall data

1. Poor capacities of GRSS and other partners on agro-meteorological and remote sensing data production, storage and utilization;
2. Manually managed rainfall database developed by AFIS is hindered the flow of information and resulting in time gaps of data;
3. The poor use of information by local authorities due to poor dissemination and communication particularly within mandated Ministries and their technical units (e.g. EW TWG);
4. Lack of clarity in the roles and mandates of the MoAFCRD and Ministry of Transport as against the MoHADM (where the data should be packaged for dissemination for early warning).

3.5.4 Way forward to enhance systematic agromet/rainfall monitoring and reporting

Short term

1. Partners to utilize available remote sensing information for more systematic seasonal monitoring by including this analysis in specific products and early warning reports/bulletins, special alerts and other publications (EW and IPC sections). In particular, partners agree to utilize Rainfall Estimation (RFE), Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), Water Requirement Satisfaction Index (WRSI), Geographic Information System (GIS) data as part of evidence of season performance in the IPC and other analyses;
2. Develop agro-meteorological and remote sensing capabilities within relevant institutions including EW TWG, the IPC TWG and other partners through specific coordinated training activities, as well as a capacity assessment/review followed by tailored trainings;
3. Explore collaboration and partnership with the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC) and others to enhance monitoring systems.

Long term

5. Develop agro-meteorological and remote sensing database(s) and periodic updates. This is instrumental to achieve one open shared database;
6. Develop mechanisms (e.g., forums, coordination meetings) to improve dissemination and use of information, particularly within mandated Ministries and their technical units (e.g. EW TWG; see EW section).

3.6 Livestock information

3.6.1 Data and info management

Livestock information is not currently being collected / monitored in any structured and coordinated system. Data on animal health and disease is occasionally monitored and collected at the community level by FAO. Livestock information is critical to monitor the food security situation and feeding into IPC analysis, FSNMS, CFSAM, as well as into short and long-term policy and programming.

3.6.2 Capacity development

In seven states, Department of Livestock within the MoAFCRD benefits from FAO LoAs by having a focal person charged with collection of data and IPC analysis at state level.

3.6.3 Main challenges in collecting and analysing livestock data

1. Lack of agro-pastoral livelihood baseline information – e.g., livestock population size, production of meat and milk, livestock body condition, change in pattern of livestock movement/migration, trade and marketing, conflicts, implication for trans-boundary animal livestock disease, etc. – that can inform monitoring and periodic analysis of pastoral livelihoods
2. Lack of systematic monitoring and analysis of data on the different aspects of pastoral livestock production that can inform policy and support decision-making.

3.6.4 Way forward to collect and analyse livestock data

Short term

1. FAO is conducting a study on "The impact of the current crisis in South Sudan on the pastoral livestock systems". The study is an initial step to design and set-up a monitoring and EW system.
2. Pilot and develop a livestock monitoring and EW information system.

Long term

1. The livelihood updates and profiling aforementioned will be important in designing a livestock monitoring analytical framework and information system, for data collection on livestock diseases, market prices, production, migration, pasture availability, off-take, etc.;
2. Development and institutionalization of the information system;
3. GRSS capacity building at national (ongoing in relation to animal disease) and state level (ongoing pilot in Lakes in relation to animal disease).

3.7 Nutrition information systems

3.7.1 Data and info management

The main sources of nutrition information in South Sudan include SMART surveys, rapid MUAC assessments, FSNMS, facility-based Health Management Information Systems (HMIS), program data and occasionally the National level South Sudan Household Surveys. The Nutrition Information Working Group (NIWG) identifies annual nutrition information needs, plans for nutrition assessments, and controls quality of the nutrition information from individual surveys through a rigorous vetting process of the protocol/methodology and findings.

The nutrition partners carry out SMART surveys with the support of UNICEF and the Nutrition Cluster in addition to the Ministry of Health. SMART surveys provide more reliable, accurate and comparable nutrition information. This information is produced either through comprehensive SMART surveys that provide global acute malnutrition (GAM) and mortality (CMR and U5MR) rates, or rapid SMART surveys which provide GAM rates only without mortality information and are appropriate for areas with limited access but require urgent information and response to emergency.

The nutrition data generated from the different sources is used to:
- analyse the nutrition situation in different states and counties, especially in conjunction with IPC workshops with approx. 20-25 nutrition specialists;
- measure change in nutrition status of vulnerable populations;
- produce the nutrition classification maps as part of the IPC analysis; or produce Nutrition Situation reports simultaneously to the IPC reports;
- Inform decisions for response prioritization and implementation by the different actors; and
- Used as input for nutrition cluster annual strategic response plan.

3.7.2 Capacity development

The nutrition information in South Sudan is managed by the Department of Nutrition in the Ministry of Health and is mostly supported by the UN partners particularly UNICEF and FAO along with the NIWG of the Nutrition Cluster. There is a need to enhance capacity within the Ministry of Health (MoH) to conduct SMART surveys; however, currently the main challenge is the limited staff within the national and the 10 state Ministries to be trained in nutrition analysis. The participation of NGO staff has significantly contributed to reduce the capacity gap.

3.7.3 Main challenges in strengthening nutrition information for food security analysis

1. Although SMART surveys are currently carried out in an increasing number of counties, urgent data needs are still to be addressed particularly in conflict affected areas to inform integrated food security analysis during the current crisis;
2. Nutrition monitoring is highly reliant on information collected through the FSNMS. This translates in the need for adequate human resources available from partners participating in FSNMS to collect nutrition data.
3. Nutrition survey data are aligned with IPC analysis timeframes only to a certain extent. The 3-month time relevance of data should be properly considered in order to better feed into IPC analysis rounds.
4. Lack of institutionalized and systematic nutrition database that facilitates trend analysis and projections;
5. Limited mortality information: in the absence of mortality surveys, the SMART surveys (which include mortality data) are mainly used to cover this gap; however, in South Sudan, partners who conduct SMART surveys often leave out mortality information-related questions.

3.7.4 Way forward to strengthen nutrition information for food security analysis

Building on major achievements over 2014-2015, the suggested actions to ensure nutrition data are increasingly integrated in food security analysis will require further discussions (by the partners) with UNICEF for the best possible outcomes. The best forum for this exercise is the NIWG, an already established Technical Working Group charged with the responsibility of managing nutrition information.

Short term

1. Considering the numerous challenges on the ground to conduct SMART surveys, particularly depending on security issues, lack of access and movement, and funding requirements, it is suggested to address urgent data needs particularly during the current crisis enhancing the current network approach whereby available partners on the ground are mapped out, identified, and trained to conduct SMART surveys. Priority should be given to support partners in the crisis affected states (Unity, Upper Nile & Jongeli), and in the high burden states of Warrap, NBeG and Lakes;
2. Accelerate the mapping of priority areas and partners coverage to avoid duplication of efforts and resources so that partners can respond accordingly. This exercise is being done under the leadership of the NIWG and according to its calendar in order to have all partners to act accordingly and ensuring effective coordination.
3. FEWS NET to support UNICEF in conducting SMART surveys particularly in difficult-to-reach areas as for instance, the FEWSNET SMART survey conducted in Pigi/Canal County in Jonglei and Mayendit County in Unity both of which were used in the September 2015 IPC analysis. However, the surveys was not able to feed into the IPC analysis (September 2015) for timing issues. It is suggested that future planning takes into consideration IPC timeframes– security permitting;
4. To ensure the nutrition specific section included in the FSNMS is properly filled during the survey, adequate human resources (e.g. nutrition experts) from NIWG and related partners should be systematically available for each survey round (e.g. assessment teams planning improved to ensure sustainable engagement of partners).
5. Timing of SMART surveys needs to be better aligned to the timeframe of the IPC Acute analysis exercises, for data analysis relevance and timeliness purposes. Schedules and timeframes should be agreed upon and consistently applied= security permitting..

Long term

1. Ensure hand over of nutrition information to UNICEF / NIWG and support the strengthening of data management system within the MoH to develop a central nutrition database. Archive past and new surveys' findings to generate data for trend analysis.

3.8 Early Warning System

3.8.1 Data and info management

Early Warning Systems are the main mechanisms that inform humanitarian assistance planning. the UN system coordinated by UNMISS produce a comprehensive EW matrix which compiles (mostly security and political) indicators from different contributing agencies.

In addition, WFP with partners' support is engaged in establishing an early warning information network. This network is coordinated by the MoHADM, while it is chaired by the RCC and co-chaired by NBS/MoA. Partners are WFP, FAO, FEWS, and OCHA which provide coordinated technical support particularly in terms of sectoral information (e.g. market prices, rainfall, population movement, diseases and epidemics) collected and analysed.

3.8.2 Capacity Development

WFP supports the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, and the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRS) in the development of a National Early Warning System and the related National Policy on Disaster Management. The aim is to create a strong Early Warning Network by enhancing local partners and institutions' capacities to collect and analyse sectoral information and producing a monthly early warning bulletin to be shared with main actors and stakeholders in the country. Currently the efforts are focused in non-conflict affected states.

3.8.3 Main challenges in aggregating early warning info and related capacities

1. Lack of an aggregating tool that allows for a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the shocks and the inter-linkages between them. The IPC provides projections on food security, but is not designed to provide indicators for the other four thematic areas of the EW TWG;
2. Given poor capacities, there is yet poor government ownership of EW processes, also given long term planning issues due to budgeting constraints;
3. Effective mechanisms for information flow and dissemination to different stakeholders including relevant decision makers need to be improved
4. Effective mechanisms for information flow and dissemination to communities still need to be put in place – a process that requires GRSS leadership;
5. There is lack of capacity in the EW TWG to conduct post disaster assessment including related data analysis, report writing and timely dissemination.

3.8.4 Way forward to aggregate early warning info and related capacities

Short term

1. The current WFP effort in support of the setting up an EW system within the MoHA and the RRC is an important step to empower and capacitate the government in its disaster preparedness and response planning. Such support should be sustained beyond December 2015. Possible duplication of efforts by agencies (WFP, FEWS NET, FAO, UNDP, OCHA) and donors in supporting government initiatives in EW should be avoided and discussed at the level of HCT;

2. Support the establishment of communication mechanisms to ensure the flow and dissemination of EW information to relevant decision makers.

3. Support and strengthen the capacity of the EW TWG to produce more timely EW bulletins in a critical food security situation (e.g. skills and Standard Operating Procedures to generate post-disaster – natural disasters – Rapid Assessment Reports within 24 hr., 72hrs.); this requires an emphasis on data and information preparedness, in order to be able to leverage secondary data in sudden onset emergencies.

Long term

4. Ensure the EW being implemented by MoHA and RRC does not replicate efforts and it is directly linked to the RSSFSC and FSTS:
   - One possible option is to ensure the FSTS has appropriate links with the EW TWG by seconding one staff member from the EW TWG to the RSSFSC/FSTS;
   - Another option is to ensure that the FSTS is the key point of reference feeding information into the Food Security and Livelihoods Thematic Working Group on one hand, as well as the RSSFSC on the other. Flowing of information from the same body to both the RSSFSC and EW TWG would ensure consistency of analysis and decision-making.

3.9 Resilience-related information

The first step in the promotion of resilience oriented policy and programs is the resilience context analysis (RCA) prepared by the resilience country team in August 2015 which is currently undergoing a series of technical consultations between partners to translate the findings into a country Action Plan for coordinated interventions in resilience building. The Common Action Plan will pave the way to the Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF), which will replace the current United Nations Development Action Framework (UNDAF) and cover the period from January 2016 until July 2017. A Results Framework related to the Action Plan will be developed in order to monitor over time resilience-relevant indicators for which data is available and indicate data gaps. Finally, agencies are called to agree on the most appropriate Coordination Mechanisms to monitor the implementation of both the Common Action Plan and the Results Framework at national and state levels.

It is recognized that partnerships are key in the resilience agenda and the RCA has consequently identified key areas of coordination between agencies:

  ➢ Information sharing;
  ➢ Joint assessments and analysis;
  ➢ Increased convergence of activities through joint planning and programming;
  ➢ Multi-sector coordination mechanisms geared towards building sustainable systems;
  ➢ Synergies across interventions supported by resilience focal points or working groups;
  ➢ Mutual accountability; and
  ➢ Aligned resource mobilization and funding.

Against this background, FSIN is proposed to act as an enabling framework for improving the coordination and alignment between partner agencies and local actors particularly in the areas of the effective information systems to monitor and analyse resilience. The following challenges have been identified and the way forward supported by FSIN partners through a medium to long term approach.

3.9.1 Main challenges

1. The institutional set up for resilience programming: MoAFCRD has been identified as the coordinator of Resilience-related Programs as it is mandated to chair the Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRISI/IGAD) resilience process. Therefore, the possibility of using CAMP as main possible vehicle for resilience programming needs to be explored. However, it should be recognized the broader scope of the resilience concept encompassing different sectors beyond that of agriculture– e.g. social protection. Under the Government/DPs Forum the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs has been mandated to lead a technical group, with a prominent role of the FSC SG. Moreover, strong links between the Government and relevant agencies' work should also be ensured;

2. Resilience analysis has not been undertaken so far in South Sudan. One exception is the resilience measurement and analysis carried out through the Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA) methodology[4] as part of an impact assessment study of the CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) Project[5] in 2013 prior to the conflict;

3. An ongoing effort in resilience analysis is the context analysis being carried out under the lead of WFP in partnership with FAO under the IGAD/RAU[6] that can be a good starting point, but needs to be sustained with additional efforts in order to monitor resilience capacity over time possibly through sound indicators. A first coordinated effort should overcome the lack of clarity on what data are required and what analytical process is to guide resilience programming.

3.9.2 Way forward activities are proposed as medium to long term actions:

1. Build on already existing strategic plans (i.e. CAMP) for a resilient agricultural sector and resilient food systems;

2. Strengthen the links between the IGAD/RAU currently supported by WFP, FAO, UNICEF,, UNDP and OCHA to ensure the resilience context analysis is followed up by further analytical support as per RAU analytical framework (e.g. the use of quantitative and qualitative analysis for measuring resilience at household level using RIMA and the mixed-method approach);

3. Encourage stronger engagement by FEWS NET in the whole process;

4. Conduct on the job training of country officers and local institutions (NBS/ MoAFCRD) by the RAU;

5. The Global FSIN team to catalyse global efforts: South Sudan could be one of the country under which the existing Rome Based Agencies (RBAs) collaboration on 'Strengthening resilience for food security and nutrition' be implemented pending decision of relevant stakeholders and the ongoing prioritization process at Headquarters and Regional level.

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[4] RIMA index identifies and weighs the six pillars and relating factors that contribute to make household resilient to shocks affecting their food security. Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA) Factsheet, Improved Global Governance for Hunger Reduction programme Information Pack (www.fao.org/3/a-i3920e/index.html).

[5] CIDA Project: "Sustainable Food Security Through Community Based Livelihood Development and Water Harvesting" in Upper Nile and Jonglei.

[6] RCA is the first step of the RAU analytical framework for resilience analysis. For more information see the IGAD Joint Programming Document for the Resilience Analysis Unit.

IV. Medium to long term areas of intervention: gaps, challenges and way forward

As long-term actions, the following areas of interventions are proposed to be addressed through coordinated efforts between the three agencies:

4. Ensuring Institutional coordination on Food Security and Nutrition;
5. Facilitate mechanisms for open data and information sharing;

4.1 Institutional coordination on Food Security and Nutrition

A long standing issue is the weak coordination among different GRSS stakeholders in the provision of information to decision makers. In this context, it appears that the RSSFSCS and related FSTS have the potential to address the related shortcomings. However, the RSSFSCS effectiveness in delivering its mandate is currently limited essentially by two factors:

1. The function of its Secretariat to aggregate food security analysis and prepare policy briefs to inform the Council is limited by the weak capacities of the existing FSTS and limitation of RSSFSC Secretariat own staffing;
2. Weak ownership from line ministries on the RSSFSC and on the work of the FSTS.

4.1.1 Way forward in the medium to long term

In order to address coordination issues, FSIN partners will coordinate efforts to support and strengthen the RSSFSC Secretariat and its related bodies (e.g. FSTS) in the medium to longer-term period by:

1. Supporting the existing efforts by the RSSFSC Secretariat to involve all line ministries through the activation of the Technical Steering Committee. The RSSFSC TSC main function will be to identify key FNS policy issues that require the constitution of a Technical Working group that FAO and WFP could potentially support by providing an advisory role;
2. Upon strong institutional commitment by NBS and FSCS, and mobilization of adequate managerial capacity, ensure the work of the FSTS is properly supported by the secondment of line ministries staff:
   - The agencies agree that stronger linkages between FSTS and RSSFSCS should be ensured through an appropriate institutional set-up;
   - FSTS should not replace the analytical capacities that exist in the different line ministries rather it should play the function of integrating the different information relevant to the RSSFSC for food security high-level decision-making processes. To this end, and for longer-term sustainability, it would be critical that FSC TSC asserts its policy analysis role and a limited number of staff is seconded from line ministries to increase capacity in the FSTS;
   - Over the short and medium term, it will be important that partners continue providing technical support and CD to FSTS through the possible secondment of international staff, on the job training, and provision of resources for study tours and specific trainings.

4.2 Facilitate mechanisms for open data and information sharing

It is recognised by the partners, as well as by relevant governmental counterparts, that open data and information sharing among key actors are fundamental for more efficient and effective decision-making and policy action for food and nutrition security. Agencies have agreed on progressing towards data harmonization, integration, transparency and reciprocal accessibility, with the final objective to make relevant analysis replicable with an impact on cost and overall quality.

4.2.1 Way forward in the medium to long term

- Improve interoperability of the three agencies' and government's datasets by using a common format, e.g. the price datasets should use a standard structure and labels for metadata, including the names of the states, counties, commodities, markets, unit of measurement, etc.
- Second step is to make the different databases communicate between each other for automatic and mutual data availability and exchange. This can be achieved using the Application Programming Interface (API) technology and linkages. Two levels of integration are possible:
    1. Four communicating APIs (one API for each agency and one for the government);
    2. One common database for FAO/FEWS NET/WFP that communicates with Government's system through APIs; this solution is more cost-effective
- The API technology allows to open the databases to the extent desired, e.g. to other partners (including for example in the context of IPC analyses), the public, globally.
    - ➢ The process should in fact be aligned to the FSIN work at the global level on food price databases harmonization.

Resources/capacity building needed

1. Data expert(s) during the interoperability improvement phase
2. Information manager to define the APIs structure and schema + IT expert to do the programming
3. Data literacy trainings for country staff, as well as relevant Government partners such as the NBS and other Line Ministries
4. Possibility of secondment and/or TDY

V.   Opportunities: FSIN long-term vision

5.1 Food Security Policy and Sustainable Development Goals process

It is noted that it would be important to support the Government in the finalization of their draft **Food Security Policy.** A clear Government policy on Food Security, with well-articulated roles and mandates, would indeed enable partners to best identify opportunities and the relevant institutions for capacity strengthening and support.

Moreover, the current draft Policy has mostly a "food focus", and would therefore benefit from a broader perspective on Food Security related aspects, such as Nutrition, Resilience and Social Protection.

5.1.1 Way forward

It is recognized that the finalization of the Food Security Policy requires a longer timeframe, additional capacities beyond current programs, and a long-term process to enhance coordination between different GRSS line ministries and related departments. Therefore, actions to be implemented in the **long-term**:

1. Enable a process of consultation with the GRSS, in particular with the RSSFSC, MoAFCRD, MoHADM and MoH;
2. Review the status of the draft Food Security Policy;
3. Ensure the inclusion of Nutrition, Resilience and Social Protection related aspects.

Follow up action would include the development of an FNS strategy and related investment plan.

As part of the assistance to finalize the Policy, it would also be important to align such effort to the ongoing global process of defining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) monitoring framework. The global process of defining and agreeing on the SDGs indicators is ongoing for better designing, monitoring and evaluating effective policies. Against this background, countries need to monitor their policies and programs in terms of progress against those indicators. This is an opportunity to monitor progress in a new manner that can contribute to results-based management framework. This highlights the importance to enhance the capacities of the NBS and relevant line ministries for improved data collection modalities and related statistical capacities in particular for what concerns SDG2 on FNS.

Possible **action** can include the support to GRSS and relevant institutions in aligning country-level monitoring frameworks to the SDGs process. FSIN partners have sponsored the participation of representatives from NBS and MoAFCRD from South Sudan in the Regional FSIN Technical Consultation on "Food and Nutrition Security and Resilience Analysis – Are we effectively using the right data?"

The Consultation was organized in collaboration with the African Union Commission and was held in November 2015 in Addis Ababa. The outcome of the conference is the development of a framework to strengthen national food security and nutrition information systems and statistical capacities to enhance evidence-based decision-making and policy monitoring. Hereby, a stronger commitment from national and regional stakeholders is desired to encourage investments in the data and information sector.

5.2 Higher education capacity building

In view of making food and nutrition security an integral part of a renovated generational awareness, as well as enhanced in-house expertise and professionalism, linkages with the educational world should be explored.

In particular, university courses and programmes on food and nutrition security should be established at the University of Juba, with a view of institutionalizing them and possibly establishing a dedicated department/research environment on food security and nutrition related issues.

This can be linked to similar courses and research patterns undertaken by foreign universities, international institutions, etc., in the context of an enhanced South-South and triangular cooperation.

Way forward

- Link up with the University of Juba to discuss further
- Identify possible linkages with relevant programmes offered in other universities

VI.   VI. Conclusion and way forward

In light of the above, FSIN at global level, will ensure support to the operationalization of the proposed priority areas and related action points through the development and implementation of the Operational Strategy's joint work plan under the FSIN framework for collaboration. The proposed Operational Strategy's joint work plan is reported in Annex I and is based on already ongoing activities, projects and resources.

The coordinated efforts of the four agencies are formalized under the proposed Letter of Intent between partners that is reported in Annex II. Given the long-term perspective of these objectives, the collaboration is to be considered open-ended. The initial workplan of the Operational Strategy has a timeframe through end of December 2016, assuming that sufficient funding is already mobilized under current programmes, i.e. WFP VAM, FAO AFIS, FEWS NET, and UNICEF. The four partners can adjust and extend this timeframe as required for implementation of agreed activities.