

Amendment proposal to the Classification on Statistical Activities 2.0 for the inclusion of a new Food Security and Nutrition data domain and related adjustment to the 'Agriculture, Forestry and fishing' Statistics domain

Meeting of the UN Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications, October 2024

Draft submitted by FAO, UNICEF, and WHO for discussion

Background

Achieving global food security and nutrition (FSN) continues to be a longstanding priority, as captured in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development under Goal 2. Food security and nutrition are confronted with unprecedented global challenges. The consequences of which are reflected in rising levels of hunger, food insecurity and the threat to the nutrition of populations. In line with SDG 2 and the United Nations' work on food systems transformation that recognize the urgency of addressing FSN issues, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), an intergovernmental body within the United Nations System, at its forty-sixth session, included a work stream on FSN data collection and analysis into its [multi-year program of work for 2020–2023](#). This marked a historic moment, emphasizing the urgent need to develop standards, harmonize and improve data and statistics for FSN to enhance capacities of countries to make evidence-based policies to eradicate hunger (Sustainable Development Goal 2), and to achieve food security and adequate nutrition for all.

At the fifty-first plenary session of CFS in October 2023, the [CFS policy recommendations on strengthening collection and use of Food security and nutrition \(FSN\) data and related analysis tools](#) were endorsed as an action-oriented, inter-governmentally agreed upon, voluntary and non-binding, global policy framework in support of country-led efforts towards improving food security and nutrition policies and actions. They contain a collective call for action targeting diverse stakeholders with an objective of further strengthening FSN data systems to improve decision-making in support of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.

In particular, with the objective to increase the collaboration among parties on the harmonization and sharing of FSN data but also raise the visibility of the importance of these data to fill policy-relevant FSN data gaps, one of the CFS policy recommendations encourages governments, international organizations and their regional bodies “to consider the need to address statistics on food security and nutrition as a potential new domain within the Statistical Commission, taking into account ongoing UN intergovernmental processes in this regard” (recommendation 4 (b)). As a result, in its report to the 55th session of the UNSC, FAO, in agreement and coordination with UNICEF and WHO, brought this recommendation to the Commission and invited its

members to “approve the creation of a new data domain on food security and nutrition statistics under the aegis of the Commission”¹.

In response to this invitation, UNSC members adopted two related resolutions during the 55th session. First, they welcomed the CFS policy recommendations on strengthening the collection and use of food security and nutrition data and related analytical tools. And second, they endorsed the inclusion of a new agenda item on FSN statistics under the aegis of the Commission and invited the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications to consider FSN as a stand-alone statistical data domain in the classification of statistical activities².

This marked a significant step towards enhancing global efforts to address food security and nutrition challenges. In the immediate term, a stand-alone FSN data domain under the UNSC will help address some critical challenges identified by the CFS, related to (1) the fragmentation and lack of standardization of FSN data available across different international agencies, government sectors, public and private institutions, (2) the lack of an internationally-agreed upon definition for FSN data, and (3) the absence of an agreed upon minimum set of indicators to effectively monitor the state of food security and nutrition, beyond what currently exists within the SDG monitoring framework.

A stand-alone FSN data domain will also address a critical gap in the CSA Version 2.0 in that this ever important multi- and inter-sectoral topic is currently vaguely lumped into the domain on “Agriculture, forestry and fishing” within sectoral statistics as part of the Economics Statistics Domain.

Finally, the new FSN data domain will help address difficulties confronted in assessing food security worldwide to allow for timely, standardized, comparisons across countries. In particular, global inconsistencies persist in: indicators used, data coverage, data collection frequency, and the lack of multi-sectoral coordination. For example, the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition (GLOPAN), an independent international group of leaders, highlight in a [2015 report on metrics and data for effective food systems policies](#) that over half of countries globally do not collect sufficient data to assess global nutrition goals. Furthermore, it would give a permanent mechanism, driven by UN country members, to guide the work around FSN data and serve as a space of endorsement of methods and standards of FSN data collection, analysis and dissemination.

This document provides a proposal for the inclusion of a stand-alone data domain for food security and nutrition within the classification of statistical activities 2.0 adopted by the UN

¹ See Report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on recent developments in agricultural and rural statistics (E/CN.3/2024/12, para 90 c) available at: https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session_55/documents/2024-12-AgricultureStats-E.pdf

² See Report on the fifty-fifth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (E/2024/24-E/CN.3/2024/36, para 55/110 d and e), available at: https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session_55/documents/2024-36-FinalReport-E.pdf

Statistical Commission at its 54th session. It was prepared by FAO, UNICEF and WHO in consultation with the UNSD and an expert group on food security and nutrition statistics³ (see membership in the annex). Indeed, the expert group met twice (in person in August 2024, and virtually in September 2024) to assist the three Organizations in preparing and validating the proposed amendment to the CSA 2.0 for UNCEISC consideration.

Amendment proposal – Classification on statistical activities 2.0

1) New data domain and subdomains for food security and nutrition

It is proposed to add a **new food security and nutrition domain under the CSA Domain 5 on cross-cutting statistics**. This new domain could receive the **code 511** without affecting the existing classification structure under domain 5.

In its deliberations, the expert group on food security and nutrition statistics has defined FSN data as *“data needed to carry out statistical activities related to the multiple pillars of food security, diets, and nutritional outcomes”*. The group also agreed that the FSN data domain should be applicable to statistical activities on the state and changes of food security, diets, and nutrition at the individual-, household-, community and population-levels and include the different elements of food security and nutrition statistics such as data on food and nutrient supplies, physical and economic access to food, diets, and nutritional status.

This food security and nutrition data domain would therefore encompass statistical activities that span National Statistics Offices (NSOs) and relevant ministries, consider economic, environment and social dimensions of FSN and address the need of data harmonization to produce standardized and comparable analyses within and between countries. While the inclusion of the FSN data domain under the domain 1 on demographic and social statistics was explored and discussed, the multi-dimensional nature of the above activities motivated the proposal to include FSN within the existing domain 5 on cross-cutting statistics in the Classification of Statistical Activities Version 2.0.

It is also proposed to **disaggregate the FSN data domain into two FSN specific subdomains** in which all statistical activities related to FSN will be integrated. This decision is based on several discussions involving FAO, UNICEF and WHO and the expert group on FSN statistics⁴. The main reasons behind the proposed delineation of the data domain into two distinct subdomains are that these statistics usually serve different policies, and their underlying statistical activities are generally overseen by different areas within NSOs and/or different line ministries.

To date, the class structure, or subdomains, that have emerged are the following:

³ This group was established under the UN committee of experts on food security, agriculture and rural statistics as an interim solution to conduct this work and is expected to be formalized as a new UN Committee of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition at the 56th session of the UN Statistical Commission.

⁴ See footnote above.

511	Food Security and Nutrition	<i>Covers statistical activities on the state and changes of food security, diets, and nutrition at the individual-, household-, community and population-levels. It includes the different elements of food security and nutrition statistics such as data on food and nutrient availability, physical and economic access to food, diets, and nutritional status.</i>	Excludes: • Agriculture, forestry and fishing (20301)
5111	Food availability and access	<i>Covers statistical activities related to food availability and access. Includes statistics such as food and nutrient availability, physical and economic food access, and the socio-cultural determinants of food access.</i>	Excludes: • Agriculture, forestry and fishing (20301) • Diets and Nutrition (5112)
5112	Diets and nutrition	<i>Covers statistical activities related to diets, nutrient intakes, and nutrition outcomes. Includes statistics such as food and nutrient intakes, energy balance, nutrient adequacy, the monetary and non-monetary costs of healthy diets, and the affordability of nutritious foods.</i>	Excludes: • Agriculture, forestry and fishing (20301) • Food availability and access (5111)

2) Amendment to the data domain on “Agriculture, forestry and fishing” (20301)

The creation of the new FSN data domain impacts the scope of the subdomain on “agriculture, forestry and fishing” (20301) of the CSA 2.0, which included a reference to food and food security. Given the addition of a new FSN domain under the CSA, we propose to: 1) remove the reference to food and food security from the 20301 class description, and 2) include of the food security and nutrition domain (511) in its exclusion list. This will ensure that the CSA is clear on the mutual exclusivity of the two data domains, FSN and “Agriculture, forestry and fishing.” The two proposed changes to the data domain on “Agriculture, forestry and fishing” are presented below.

20301 Agriculture, forestry and fishing	Covers statistical activities related to agriculture, forestry and fishing. Includes agricultural monetary statistics (agricultural economic accounts), agricultural structures (farm structure), agricultural production, agricultural commodities, agro-industry statistics (including food production and safety), food and food security , organic farming and organic food, products source and use tables, forest and forest product statistics, trade in forest products, fisheries.	Excludes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural labour input (103) • Food security and nutrition (511) • Government expenditure for trade in agricultural products, crop and agriculture, forestry and fishing (20103) • Forest resource assessment (20105) • Environmental accounting for agriculture, forestry and fishing (20105) • Forest fire (304).
---	--	---

Other considerations on this amendment proposal to the CSA 2.0

The proposed new data domain on food security and nutrition statistics will however not be completely mutually exclusive from the Health domain (105). Indeed, under the CSA 2.0, the Health statistical domain *“Covers health and mortality related statistical activities, including topics like life expectancy, health status, health and safety, **health determinants (including lifestyle, nutrition, smoking, alcohol and drug use)**, health resources and expenditure, health care systems, morbidity and mortality (including infant and child mortality), hospital admission, causes of illness and death, specific diseases (e.g. AIDS), disabilities, pharmaceutical consumption and sales, health personnel, remuneration of health professions, environmental health status, health inequality.”*

The possibility to remove any reference to nutrition from the health data domain was discussed with the WHO and the FSN expert group. It was however recommended to keep it in the context of health determinants, which is a lot more contained than the statistical activities that are suggested under the new FSN data domain. Also, many aspects of health, and how nutrition impacts health, are embodied within health outcomes. Taking it out from the health domain would create a gap in the analysis framework of health. As a result, it is recommended to recognize the overlaps rather than removing it, which is somewhat consistent with the fact the FSN data domain is proposed to fall under the CSA domain 5 on cross-cutting statistics.

Annex: Membership of the Expert Group on food security and nutrition statistics consulted for this proposal.

Constituency	Name	Institution/Organization (Country)
Academia/Policy research	Jef Leroy	IFPRI (Belgium)
Academia/Policy research	Rosana Salles da Costa	Instituto de Nutrição (INUB) da Universidade Federal do - Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)
Academia/Policy research	Teresa Shamah	National Institute of Public Health-INSP (Mexico)
NSO	Nathaniel Dlamini	Senior Statistician, Food and Nutrition Security Unit, Statistics (South Africa)
NSO	Shri Ashwani Kanaujia	National Informatics Centre Govt. of India (India)
NSO	Leonardo Oliveira	Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics-IGBE (Brazil)
NSO	Samuel Kobina Annim	Ghana Statistical Services
NSO	Mary Mwale	Ministry of Agriculture, Head of Food and Nutrition Security, Kenya
NSO	Hilde Orderud	Statistics Norway
NSO	Alisha Coleman-Jensen	United States Department of Agriculture-USDA-Economic Research Service-ERS (United States)
UN/International Org	Jose Rosero Moncayo	FAO
UN/International Org	Bridget Holmes	FAO
UN/International Org	Carlo Cafiero	FAO
UN/International Org	Lynnette Neufeld	FAO
UN/International Org	Valerie Bizier	FAO
UN/International Org	Chika Hayashi	UNICEF (United States)
UN/International Org	Dean Jolliffe	World Bank (United States)
UN/International Org	Elaine Borghi	WHO (Switzerland)
UN/Academia	Rebecca Michelle Kanter	University of Chile and Consultant for FAO
UN/International Org	Lynnda Kiess	World Food Programme
Academia/Policy research	Sandra Crispim	Federal University of Paraná (Brazil)
Academia/Policy research	Rafael Perez Escamilla	Yale University (United States)
UN/International Org	Jose Rosero Moncayo	FAO
UN/International Org	Arbab Asfandiyar Khan	FAO
UN/International Org	Giles Hanley Cook	FAO

UN/International Org	Yon Fernandez de Larrinoa	FAO
UN/International Org	Tatjana Karaulac	UNICEF
UN/International Org	Julian Chow	United Nations Statistics Division-UNSD
Academia/Policy research	Sheryl Hendricks	Director of the Natural Resources Institute - University of Greenwich (England)
Academia/Policy research	Anna Taylor	Executive Director of the Food Foundation - United Kingdom
Academia/Policy research	Eric Verger	Institute of Research for Development (France)
NSO	Astrid Mathiassen	Norway
NSO	Felix Baquedano	USDA-ERS
Academia/Policy research	Erin Milner	United States Agency for International Development-USAID
UN/International Org	Nathalie Troubat	Pacific Community
UN/International Org	Francesco Branca	WHO
UN/International Org	Elaine Borghi	WHO
UN/International Org	Richard Kumapley	WHO
NSO	Matthew Rabbit	USDA-ERS