

*Summary report of the first technical meeting of the
SCN Task Force on Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation
FAO Rome, 31st January- 1st February 2008*

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1. Background

In March 2006, the 33rd Session of the SCN approved its new Strategic Framework and Plan of Action and called for the creation of three Task Forces (TF) to support the SCN in implementing its 5 areas of action. The role of the TFs would be that of “harmonizing and capitalizing on the related work being done across the various constituents of the SCN... and providing support to the working group activities of relevance”. FAO and WFP were chosen as the co-chairs of the TF on Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation (TF-AME). At the following 34th SCN Annual Session held at FAO, Rome, on 26 February – 1 March 2007, a draft concept note was circulated to the prospective members of the TF-AME to start defining its objectives and activities and was presented¹ by the TF Chair at the business session on SCN Steering Committee Task Forces proposals. This concept note was later expanded and developed in more detail in November 2007 and became a draft Workplan (“Areas of Work” document- see Annex 4) that was circulated to a better defined group of Task Force members.

Membership of the TF was discussed at length, and is still in the process of being discussed. The main principle for determining members was that of making sure that the TF would include representatives of the SCN’s three constituents - UN agencies, governments and NGOs/civil society. At the moment membership is skewed towards the former (see Annex 1 for a list of members and workshop participants), but considering the TF’s relatively short existence, activities are underway to redress this inequality.

In preparation for the 35th Session of the SCN to be held in Hanoi in March 2008, the TF members held a two-day meeting in Rome on 31st January- 1st February 2008. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Take stock of key efforts undertaken in AME by selected global initiatives and gaps to be addressed;

¹ Report of the 34th SCN Session:
<http://www.unsystem.org/scn/publications/AnnualMeeting/SCN34/34sessionreport.pdf>

- Promote an improved understanding of priority areas of work and focus needed for TF-AME;
- Identify follow up actions addressing priorities under TF-AME.

Expected outcomes of the meeting included:

- An increased understanding of various efforts in AME as well as synergies and gaps to be addressed;
- A common understanding of the goals, objectives and strategy of TF-AME;
- Consensus-building on key priority areas of work for the TF-AME.

This reports provides a summary of the main points and activities of the meeting. The first section looks at the broader context in which the TF is working, particularly at existing AME institutions/initiatives that the TF could support/liaise with. The second part is a first discussion around the TF's preliminary Workplan (Areas of Work) and its first activity, while the last part of the workshop was dedicated to pulling the results of the former together and developing a number of finite and concrete activities to be developed in the short and medium term.

2. Agenda: Summary of activities and achievements

The meeting was opened by Mr. Ezzeddine Boutrif, Director of the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division, who, as a member of the SCN Steering Committee, clarified the latter's expectations/views of the TF: the TF is seen as an expert body that provides advice to the Steering Committee and in this particular moment in time, may also help the SCN shape its contribution to REACH. It is also a mechanism that can help develop tools for use by UNCTs (UN Country Teams) in the current context of MDG monitoring, and can help harmonise and build upon existing initiatives.

2.1. Stock taking of key efforts undertaken in AME by selected global initiatives

This session aimed at reviewing existing global initiatives concerned with AME of relevance to the TF. Each initiative was presented and discussed in terms of its specific objectives, target audience, scope, methods, as well as challenges and/or gaps. This allowed to gauge the extent to which the TF could potentially contribute to them. A number of presentations were therefore made and other ideas were put out on the table for information exchange and further discussion.

- **NICS (Nutrition Information in Crisis Situations);** presented by Claudine Prudhon, NICS coordinator.
 - The SCN publishes every three months the reports on Nutrition Information in Crisis Situations with the intention of raising awareness and facilitating action. The reports are designed to provide information over time on key outcome indicators from emergency- affected populations, play an advocacy role in bringing the plight of these to the attention of donors and humanitarian agencies, and to identify recurrent problems in international response capacity (see Annex 4 and the following website for more information <http://www.unsystem.org/SCN/Publications/html/rnis.html>).

- The following challenges faced by NICS were highlighted:
 1. benchmarking and interpretation of indicators (especially the ones related to food security)
 2. timeliness: gaps between surveys and reporting
 3. coverage
 4. quality control- limited access to the raw data from the country level
- Relevance to TF: the TF would be particularly useful for areas 1 and 4: in the first case it could help in the review of the indicators and in the latter it could help by advocating for the SCN's access to country level raw data.
- **HNTS (Humanitarian Health and Nutrition Tracking Service)**; presented by Bruce Cogill, chair of the IASC Nutrition Cluster.
 - The Health and Nutrition Tracking Service (HNTS) started in October 2007 by WHO with support from the emergency health and nutrition community. It is developing various mechanisms for the review, analysis, interpretation and validation of critical health and nutrition information in selected humanitarian emergencies. This includes the review of existing data from a wide variety of on-the-ground sources as well as more formal surveys. It will advise on the use of the resulting analyses for advocacy and programming with funders, UN organizations, host governments and NGOs. The primary focus is on anthropometric and mortality information with limited food insecurity and livelihood information to provide context.
 - At the global level, the HNTS is focusing on gaps and limitations in existing methodologies for collection of data relevant to humanitarian assessment and how to improve them through its Expert Reference Group and its engagement with existing initiatives including SMART. HNTS will identify data gaps in selected priority countries and engage with relevant groups to address these gaps.
 - The Steering Committee of the HNTS is consists of representatives of NGOs, UN agencies and the IASC Health and Nutrition Clusters. The motivation for setting up the HNTS was that of a need for rationalising the ever growing amount of humanitarian information collected in emergencies. Its aim is that of developing a more robust approach to collecting, analysing and communicating the results of the analyses to policy makers and the public. An Expert Reference Group, made up of about 15 experts in health, nutrition and epidemiology to guide the work of the HNTS is currently being set up.
 - At the country level, the opportunities presented by engagement in various countries through the health and nutrition clusters will be used to improve the skills and abilities of in-country partners (e.g. Governments, NGOs, community based organisations) to improve the quality data collection, their analysis and their interpretation.
 - Relevance to TF: Considering the heavy focus given by the HNTS to mortality and nutrition indicators, and given the TF's broader remit, the latter could be

particularly useful in advocating for a greater use of much-needed food security indicators alongside the HNTS' more health-related indicators.

- **FAO's Right to Food Unit (RtF)**; presented by Maarten Immink, Senior Officer of the Right to Food Unit.
 - In its 2006-2010 Action Plan the SCN clearly states that one of the aims of the TF-AME should be that of “articulating the country level monitoring system for MDG achievement... including monitoring for the Human Right to Adequate Food”. With this objective in mind, FAO's Right to Food Unit was invited to share its achievements and goals in terms of monitoring Right to Food with the TF.
 - Although the RtF is recognized as a basic human right since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, no guidance on its implementation was published before 2004. In 2004 the FAO Council adopted by consensus the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security. In order to assist states in monitoring their progress towards the realization of the right to food, the Unit is preparing a methodological reference guide that shows how assessment and analytical methods can be applied in monitoring the right to food (for more information please see: <http://www.fao.org/righttofood>).
 - Relevance to TF: the TF and the RtF Unit will maintain close contacts to avoid duplications and to share relevant information and tools.
- **ECHUI/REACH**, presented by Denise Coitinho (Coordinator, Inter-agency team on child hunger and undernutrition, Office of the Executive Director, WFP).
 - ECHUI (Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative), now REACH (Renewed Effort Against Child Hunger), was conceived in 2006 as a partnership of UN agencies, NGOs, interested private sector companies and civil society foundations that would take the lead on the hunger and nutrition dimensions of the First Millennium Development Goal (MDG-1). Key stakeholders, led by UNICEF, WHO and WFP, have so far produced a Plan of Action, and are currently focusing on a number of pilot countries for the scaling up of key nutrition interventions.
 - Closely linked to REACH, because of the involvement of WHO and because of its overall aim, is the Landscape Analysis on Readiness to Act at Scale in Nutrition: the Landscape Analysis project was born from a desire of WHO to strengthen its contribution to the achievements of the MDG. The aim of the now multi-partner project is that of creating inter-sectoral action for improving nutrition at country level and implementing it at scale. In its first phase the project is being implemented in the 36 high-burden countries where 90% of the world's stunted children live. Possible links with the TF are in the project's identification of appropriate indicators to be used and how to categorize them in order to classify countries according to the severity of nutrition problems and readiness to act.
 - Relevance to TF: the objective of the presentation was that of exchanging information in terms of objectives and activities. The TF expressed its willingness to support REACH whenever needed.

- **SMART (Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transition)** presented by Bruce Cogill
 - The Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transition program is an interagency initiative to improve monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian assistance interventions. The programme aims at providing implementing agencies and the broader humanitarian community with a wider range of tools to support humanitarian program assessment, monitoring and evaluation. One of these tools is the SMART Methodology Version 1. This provides a basic, integrated method for assessing nutritional status and mortality rate in emergency situations. It provides the basis for understanding the magnitude and severity of a humanitarian crisis. The optional food security component (Module 3) provides the context for nutrition and mortality data analysis. Please see the following website for more information: <http://www.smartindicators.org/>.
 - Relevance to the TF: the TF could be part of the updating of SMART and facilitate the review of the food security module (Module 3) which is underutilized and difficult to link to the anthropometry and mortality modules. Some NGOs have already tested the Module 3 as well as the others on the ground, but a more detailed gap analysis is needed as well as more information on what is needed for updating/revising the module on food security and capacity building. The gap analysis would then be presented and discussed during a Nutrition Cluster meeting that will take place in early April in FAO. The revision of SMART provides an opportunity to integrate the latest approaches to the measurement of food insecurity and brings together a number of agencies represented on the Task Force. It is expected that FAO and WFP will be active in the next few weeks in preparing for the identification of issues for moving SMART forward.

- **The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) in Somalia and regional partnerships concerned with AME**; presented by Grainne Moloney, Nutrition Project Manager, Food Security Analysis Unit (FSAU) Somalia,
 - A videoconference was arranged with Grainne Moloney, TF member based in Kenya, to discuss her work with the FSAU Somalia and of how this could interact with the TF.
 - An overview was given on the current interagency initiatives in Nairobi with key regional partners in nutrition (FSAU/FAO, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, ICRC, UNHCR, Concern, ACF, IMC, and many other NGOs) in attempting to harmonise approaches to nutrition analysis on the basis of available data. This is being done through a framework which pulls together a range of nutrition information and from this makes a statement on the situation. A key challenge in the region, as anywhere, is the lack of timely and reliable data so this is a tool which can alleviate that challenge to some extent- again stressing that this is not statically valid but rather an advocacy tool to link information to action. A suggestion was made that this type of interagency forum could be supported by the TF in terms of promoting interagency forum using similar tools in other regions.

- It was also highlighted that the regional forum could also support or pilot test, as necessary, any initiatives raised by the TF.
 - A further role of the TF: Given the current global roll of the IPC and the recent addition of more phases at non emergency levels, support from the TF is sought in providing technical support on the most appropriate indicators to reflect nutrition status across all phases and appropriate in a variety of contexts. The experience to date of getting a quick fix solution to including indicators such as wasting and stunting in the emergency phases, has not resulted in consensus therefore the TF could clearly fill such a capacity as a sounding board to building consensus.
- **Other initiatives/proposals:**
 - Country efforts in AME – much is already taking place at country level and the TF should support the possible gaps and challenges as well as the needs coming from AME practitioners working in national institutions. It was highlighted that there are indeed a number of initiatives concerned with nutrition surveillance/surveys. One of these is the NUSAPPS – the French acronym for Nutrition, Food Security and Public Policies in the Sahel. Led by CILSS (Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel) and in the aftermath of the food security crisis in Niger in 2005, the initiative aims to support the member countries in the collection and analysis of nutrition and food security data for early warning and crisis prevention. For more information (in French only) please click on the following link: <http://www.ird.bf/activites/106NALIS/NUSAPPS/nusapps.htm>
 - The TF could also support **OCHA** in its current initiative of Assessment and Classification of Emergencies (ACE), which may culminate with the development of a Humanitarian Phase Classification system.
 - **Networking and capacity building:** it was suggested to create a space in the SCN website where different institutions carrying out anthropometric surveys can exchange information on upcoming surveys. The rationale for this would be that of avoiding duplications and ensuring coordination when two or more institutions plan surveys in the same area/country. This could be part of the TF webpage that should be set up as part of the SCN webpage.

2.2. Review of the TF Areas of Work document and on the “Inventory of Indicators” paper

The second topic of discussion revolved around the TF’s Areas of Work document (attached) and around activity D1 (“Establish a common set of indicators and link them to relevant AME frameworks”) that was commissioned to Judith Appleton.

After a presentation of the “Inventory of indicators” paper, it was decided that the task covered too wide and controversial an area to be able to come to some “useable” conclusions at this stage. It was therefore decided not to continue working on the paper itself, as originally planned on the basis of the TORs, but rather to take one specific aspect of the paper, i.e. the list of key documents contained in Table 1, and expand on it by using the categories as laid out in Table 3. The new task would therefore be that of developing an annotated Repository of all documents related to food security and nutrition indicators, clearly specifying which

document contained/developed which indicator amongst a range of 17 main indicators. This new document would then be circulated amongst the WGs for inputs. It was decided not to continue working on the indicators' table (Table 2) as this needed further discussions/investigations on conceptual frameworks.

Other topics broached included:

- the TF's *modus operandi*: should the TF be demand driven or should it be pro-active and start working on issues that are already being raised amongst the wider nutrition/food security community? While recognizing that the former is the goal, the lack of awareness on the TF and difficulties in soliciting requests from potential users makes it complicated to rely only on demand. On the other hand, a target audience can already be identified for a number of nutrition and food security issues.
- Communication: it was noted that the TF needs to speak in a language that is clear not only for nutritionists but also to economists and food security experts.
- 4 main areas that the TF could work in:
 - normative work (standard setting)
 - capacity building
 - resource mobilisation
 - networking

2.3. Identification of activities addressing priorities under TF-AME

The above discussions served to bring to the fore the wealth of initiatives that exist in the context that the TF operates in and the need thus to prioritize the activities of the TF in the short and medium term. The choice was made to respond to some of the existing initiatives that have expressed a need for support. After an initial brainstorming session, the TF split up into two Working Groups tasked with developing “mini project proposals” for the following 5 activities identified as priorities for the next year:

1. Provide guidance on AME indicators for MDG audience: start with stunting (short term activity)
2. Stunting- produce a review paper (medium-term activity)
3. Provide technical guidance on a suite of indicators, starting with dietary diversity, hunger scale, stunting and MUAC.
4. Support to IPC on the classification of severity according to the contexts in which it is used
5. SMART- support for Module 3 (Food Security)

The Working Groups structured these proposals as follows:

- Key arguments or questions to be addressed by the activity
- Format/type of output
- Lead responsibility
- Timeframe
- Resources
- Existing capacity

Activity n.1: Statement on Stunting

- *Key arguments:* the SCN Action Plan has identified as one aim for the TF to establish stunting as the principal evaluative indicator for poverty reduction. Indeed, although there is a critical need for intervention programmes/strategies that aim at reducing chronic undernutrition and its underlying causes (including food insecurity and poverty) to demonstrate their impact, the stunting indicator is not systematically included in AME efforts. One of these efforts is the tracking of MDG. Anthropometric data are available on all three key indicators of nutritional status and historical trends in stunting can easily be recovered from existing global databases with minimum additional effort.
- *Output:* a brief statement (one page) to be presented by the Steering Committee during the upcoming 35th Session of the SCN in Hanoi (Vietnam) on the importance of establishing stunting as the main indicator of poverty (re. SCN Action Plan p.5). Age group of reference: children under 5.

2. Review paper on Stunting

- *Output:* review paper
- *Key questions:*
 - What is the appropriate time interval between impact evaluations that would allow to observe a meaningful change in stunting?
 - How can the significance of the change be judged? Statistical significance/interpretation of change.
 - Sampling methodologies for impact surveys- do we maintain the same sampling universe as in the baseline?
 - What is the optimal age group for evaluation purposes (children under 5? younger age groups? height in women of child bearing age)?
 - Age estimation: the challenge in accessing good quality age data necessary to report on stunting is a concern. Are there any improved techniques to estimate a child's age?
 - How does seasonality in linear growth affect results interpretation of follow-up surveys?
 - Utility of stunting in recurrent crises? e.g. should stunting of >40% be included as an outcome in the severity classification of Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis? In emergency context, the need to include more than one anthropometric outcome was raised to really understand the context and therefore guide appropriate decision making.

3. Technical guidance on selected indicators

- *Output:* Fact sheets (using the templates- albeit revised- in the draft Inventory of indicators' paper, p.15) for the 4 indicators mentioned above. Other indicators to be added subsequently, depending on the reception given to this first piece of work. These may be accompanied by short concept notes if time allows for preparation.
- *Key questions:* what does the indicator evaluate? What are its target population groups? For which purposes is the indicator collected? What is the relevance of the indicator for nutrition and food security/poverty/MDG AME? How is the indicator constructed? Which type of analysis should be conducted with the indicator? What are

the main limitations of the indicator? What are the main strengths of the indicator? In which context is the indicator most appropriate?

4. IPC indicators and thresholds

- *Output:* Terms of Reference for a study/review of selected indicators and thresholds used in the IPC as well as outside the IPC. The ToRs will consider a proposal prepared by Tufts and submitted to the IASC Nutrition Cluster in 2007.

5. SMART

The IASC Nutrition Cluster has convened a meeting on SMART on 7-9 April 2008, in FAO. The TF could support the process of revising the Food Security module through an issues paper.

3. Conclusions and next steps: TF-AME workplan

The two-day workshop allowed the TF, as expressed in its initial objectives, to determine synergies with selected ongoing initiatives related to AME, and to identify those gaps where it could potentially have a role and where there demand for the TF to provide its support.

The following represents a list of priority short- and medium-term activities that the TF has chosen to focus on within the coming year.

Short term activities (to be concluded prior to the 35th Session of the SCN)

1. Brief statement on stunting and poverty for the Steering Committee
2. Fact sheets on some key indicators, such as MUAC and stunting
3. 2-page leaflet on TF-AME for distribution during the 35th Session of the SCN

Medium term activities

- Review paper on selected IPC indicators and thresholds
- Review paper on stunting
- Issue paper on Module 3 of SMART

The latter will be further developed in the next months, particularly after the upcoming 35th Session of the SCN in Hanoi as this will bring more inputs and members into the TF itself.

ANNEXES

Annex 1

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Annex 2

List of Acronyms

ACF	Action Contre la FAIM
AME	Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation
CILSS	Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
ECHUI	Ending Child Hunger Initiative
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FSAU	Food Security Analysis Unit
HNTS	Humanitarian Health and Nutrition Tracking Service
IASC	Inter Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IMC	International Medical Corps
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MUAC	Middle Upper Arm Circumference
NICS	Nutrition Information in Crisis Situations
NUSAPPS	Nutrition, Food Security and Public Policies in the Sahel
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
REACH	Renewed Effort Against Child Hunger
RtF	Right to Food
SCN	Standing Committee on Nutrition
SMART	Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transition
TF AME	Task Force on Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Annex 3

Agenda



UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM STANDING COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION

Task Force on Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation

*Rome, 31st January- 1st February 2008
India Room (A327)*

Meeting Objectives

- To take stock of key efforts undertaken in AME by selected global initiatives and gaps to be addressed
- To promote improved understanding of priority areas of work and focus needed for TF-AME
- To identify follow up actions addressing priorities under TF-AME.

Meeting Outputs

- Draft workplan with agreed priorities for TF areas of work with suggested inputs/contributions
- Meeting Report

Background

- The purpose of the meeting is to convene a core group of AME experts to discuss key priorities and actions to be taken under TF-AME.
- The meeting takes place at an opportune moment given the upcoming SCN Session in Hanoi and recent efforts by various agencies and partners in the area of AME.
- The meeting is devised primarily to promote information sharing and discussion.
- The meeting will also facilitate planning a programme of work for the TF-AME in 2008.

Expected outcomes of the meeting include:

- Increased understanding of various efforts in AME as well as synergies and gaps to be addressed
- Common understanding of the goals, objectives and strategy of TF-AME
- Consensus-building on key priority areas of work for the TF-AME.

Meeting Structure

Day 1 of the meeting will focus on giving an overall picture of why the TF-AME came about and an idea of some of the other actors active in the AME field. It will subsequently allow TF-AME members to present the work they do related to the TF-AME. The rest of the Day will be dedicated to the first Activity of the TF-AME (Review of Indicators) as outlined in its Areas of Work document.

Day 2 will first of all see the continuation of the previous day's discussion on Activity 1 and the development of an action plan for the next steps building up to the SCN Hanoi Session. The remaining part of the Day will focus on the Areas of Work document, with a view to reaching a consensus on its contents and outlining a 2008 Workplan for the TF-AME.

Agenda check against the revised agenda we followed

31 January 2008

- 10:00 Welcome and introductions (Ezzedine Boutrif, Director AGN, FAO)
- 10:15 Brief situation analysis: TF-AME: mandate, expectations, deliverables (TF Chairs)
(overview of TF-AME activities in context of SCN Strategic Framework/ Action Plan)
- 10:40 Brief from SCN Secretariat: NICS and HNTS: status and issues of relevance to TF-AME
(Claudine Prudhon)
- 11:00 Nutrition Cluster/SWG on Assessment: status/issues of relevance to TF-AME (Bruce Cogill)
- 11:20 The views of TF members on the TF Areas of Work, how the TF relate to their own work, and suggested inputs to TF

12:30 *Lunch*

[Please note that the meeting will move to the Espace Gabon Room (Building A- Ground Floor) for the afternoon session]

- 13:30 Brief wrap up of morning session and presentation of Areas of Work document
- 14:00 Review of Indicators: progress and discussion (Judith Appleton)
- 14:00-14:10: presentation of Review
- 14.10-15:00: discussion on process/methodology /gaps to fill or clarifications required
- 15:00-15:30: presentation of Right to Food followed by discussion
- 15:30-15.45: *coffee break*
- 15:45-16:30: Video conference with Grainne Moloney (FSAU, Somalia)
- 16.30-17:30: discussion on proposed criteria to select a set of core indicators

1st February 2008

- 9:00 Wrap up of previous day's discussions
- 9:30 Continuation of previous day's work: identify next steps and action required on the Review of Indicators, for the 35th Session of the SCN in Hanoi
- 10:30 *Coffee break*
- 11:00 Discussion of the Areas of Work document and selection of priority activities
- 12:30 *Lunch*
- 14:00 Presentation of ECHUI-REACH and discussion
- 14:30 Development of 5 priority activities with responsibilities, timeframe and resources.
- 16:30 Wrap-up and conclusions

Annex 4
“Areas of Work” Document

UN Standing Committee on Nutrition
Task Force on Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation
Areas of Work for 2008-10

A. Introduction and background

This document has been prepared based on the ‘Principles and Strategic Elements’ and ‘Key Activity Areas’ specified in the SCN *Strategic Framework* approved at the 33rd Session of SCN in March 2006². In its vision of a ‘world where hunger and malnutrition are no longer impediments to human development’, the SCN *Action Plan 2006-2010*³ accompanying the Strategic Framework has called for a Task Force on Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation (TF-AME) in support of one of five priority areas for action⁴. The key activity area for TF-AME is described as follows:

Track and report on progress towards achieving the MDGs and other nutrition-related goals, including nutrition-related chronic diseases (NRCs), in both development and humanitarian aid settings.

Concrete progress in this key action area is expected to contribute in particular to the second specific objective in the *Action Plan*, namely: “to establish a **common understanding** [...] of hunger and malnutrition across all UN agencies, ministerial sectors and development actors”, thus placing emphasis on providing guidance for **joint action** in the context of various assessment, monitoring and evaluation initiatives, methods and techniques. This is further reinforced in a subsequent paragraph where the Action Plan states that the “task forces will seek to **harmonize and capitalize** on the related work being done across the various constituents of the SCN”.

Hence, while the Task Force is expected to report on progress made towards broad development objectives (MDGs and other nutrition-related goals/targets), it is also expected to review and provide guidance on various **assessment** and **monitoring functions** of SCN partners, while also supporting the **evaluation** of programmes, policies and interventions.

In light of the above, a number of objectives and associated activities have been identified for the TF-AME and are illustrated below. These are to be discussed, refined and endorsed by the TF members and to be translated into a concrete work plan and terms of reference (TORs) for the TF-AME itself.

B. Objectives for 2008-10

Based on the overall guidance provided by the SCN Strategic Framework and Action Plan, the TF-AME has established the following key objectives and functions for itself to direct its work over the next three years:

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² SCN Strategic Framework. Available at: www.unsystem.org/scn/Publications/strategic_framework200604.pdf

³ SCN Action Plan 2006-2010. Available at: www.unsystem.org/scn/publications/action_plan_200604.doc

⁴ The other four key areas are: (1) advocacy, communication and partnership building; (2) development of integrated approaches; (3) the mainstreaming of human rights; and (4) identifying key scientific and operational gaps.

1. Given the important role of **indicators** in conducting work on AME, and based on a wide variety of work carried out in this field in the context of achieving MDGs, and including more specific **food, care and health** objectives and nutrition outcomes, the TF-AME will aim to:
 - a) Establish an agreed-upon **minimum set of core indicators** on food deprivation and malnutrition that would be acceptable to members involved in all areas of development and humanitarian work; the indicators would cover the three key areas of **food, care and health**.
 - b) Distinguish indicators at different levels of aggregation, depending on the clients of the AME services (local-regional-global) and identify different modes of action per area of information (i.e. link information to action).
2. In line with SCN objectives of arriving at a '*common understanding*', '*harmonised approaches*' and '*joint action*', provide a **forum** where members can **exchange information** on best practices, tools, methods and approaches in assessment, monitoring and evaluation.
3. Similar to the idea of a forum, the TF-AME may serve as a **sounding board** on AME matters, based on demand expressed by the SCN Working Groups, various inter-agency initiatives (such as the IASC), or individual SCN member institutions; this could entail providing technical feedback, or peer reviewing, proposed inter-agency activities and outputs.

C. Cross-cutting themes and guiding principles

In carrying out its work, the SCN Task Force on AME will place particular emphasis on the following cross-cutting themes and/or guiding principles:

1. Link the work done in the *development and humanitarian aid* settings, recognizing that the two should not be thought of separately. Systems and structures need to be in place in crisis prone areas, with a capacity to serve the crisis when it occurs.

2. Linking *health and nutrition to food security and livelihoods* (in the context of the MDGs)

Both the Strategic Framework and the Action Plan (2006-2010) place the work of the SCN Task Forces in the broader context of the MDGs, in particular MDG1 concerned with the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, while recognising the direct and indirect relevance of other MDGs. Traditionally, nutrition has been more closely associated with health, often forgetting about the food-related aspect. As elaborated above, the TF-AME will organise its work around three core areas related to food, health and care. It is therefore important to ensure that the assessment, monitoring and evaluation on health, care and nutrition concerns are linked to food security issues and to broader contextual analysis of poverty and sustainable livelihoods⁵. This means that the Task Force on AME will have to examine assessment, monitoring and evaluation issues that link health and nutrition concerns to the underlying development ones.

3. Considering indicators and associated actions related to all geographical levels: *global, regional and local*.

D. Start-up Activities for SCN Task Force on Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation

D.1 Establish a common set of indicators and link them to relevant AME frameworks

⁵ FAO 2003. International Scientific Symposium Proceedings. "Measurement and Assessment of Food Deprivation and Undernutrition". www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/Y4249E/y4249e00.htm

Over the years, a number of conceptual frameworks have been developed linking the concepts of food security, livelihoods, health and nutrition. In spite of differences between them, they share a core set of building blocks that have broad inter-agency agreement (i.e. aspects related to food, health and care). One of the main activities of the Task Force in line with the SCN strategy, which calls for the “identification and monitoring of causes of malnutrition within a livelihoods framework”, would therefore be that of:

- agreeing on a core (minimum) set of indicators that would suit constituents in different sectors and that could be used for AME purposes in different development and humanitarian contexts (e.g. chronic poverty, crisis, transitional situations, post-crisis, chronic food insecurity) and at all levels (community, country, global).

The agreed upon list of indicators would allow the different development partners to come to a common understanding of underlying issues (e.g. through situation analysis) and of how the situation evolves or changes following interventions (development support) as well as after shocks (relief, recovery). This will include agreement on ways of monitoring and evaluating impacts and outcomes. In defining a core set of indicators, the TF-AME will draw upon and consolidate both nutrition measures and outcomes used in development contexts (as in: FAO 2005, ‘Nutrition Indicators for Development’), and the wealth of information on AME that has been developed in the emergency/humanitarian context. The outcome would be a list of indicators that apply to various crisis and post-crisis situations as well as in chronic poverty and development contexts. Among others, the TF-AME will need to maintain a close working relationship with the SCN Working Groups on Household Food Security and Nutrition in Emergencies, while also drawing from OCHA’s current work on compiling an inventory of assessment initiatives in emergencies.

The TF-AME will draw relevant lessons for application in the broader sphere of use and interpretation of nutritional data in development and poverty programmes as well as in conflict and transitional contexts.

The TF-AME will also examine ways in which indicators can best be organised, separating impact, outcome and key context indicators for understanding results, from process-oriented indicators. An initial matrix along these lines to start a discussion amongst TF members and to compare indicators for different purposes is presented below. A key part of discussions will relate to the SCN’s request for “linking health and nutrition to food security and livelihoods (in the context of the MDGs)”.

Table 1: Proposed matrix for organising different indicators on food, health and care

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Food</i>	<i>Health</i>	<i>Care</i>	<i>Relevance to A, M, E</i>	<i>Relevance to monitoring MDG progress</i>
Context indicators (e.g. vulnerability context, policies, institutions)					
Process indicators					
Impact indicators (outputs, nutritional status)					
Outcome indicators (changes in approach to nutrition)					

Care will be taken to distinguish between global/national level indicators, from those that are more suited to community and household levels, and others that measure individual outcomes. There may also be a need to distinguish between indicators appropriate for acute crisis contexts, transitional contexts, post-crisis and chronic food insecurity contexts. Existing programmes in pilot countries could be identified to help illustrate this.

Other considerations the TF will note are current reliability, coverage, and costs.

Other activities in this area of work would include:

- identifying existing M&E frameworks incorporating or relevant to nutritional impact, such as the “triple-A” and various forms of participatory evaluation
- means of sharing or developing joint methods and tools for data collection and analysis
- discuss added value by the TF to MDG tracking, while working towards country- level advice on relevant AME

D.2 Linking information to action

The TF-AME needs to address two fundamental questions, which relate to the need to shed greater clarity on:

- **who** does it identify as its main clients or target audience? and
- **what action** does the TF-AME want to inform or influence?

As stated above, the TF is expected to provide guidance to the SCN Steering Committee and to its Working Groups. Other actors however should benefit from the TF’s support, including development partners more generally and local actors for more effective country- and sub-national-level action (i.e. at district, community and household levels).

Below is a schematic landscape of four levels of actors and action areas and some (very few) examples of information system activities as they relate to AME:

Actors & Action Areas	Purpose Of Information Systems Activities		
	assessment	monitoring	evaluation
level 1: community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> community development planning of FS/N activities extension work raising awareness 	- participatory appraisal for intervention projects	- growth monitoring - Health facility data	- M&E of local small-scale projects (usually externally driven)
level 2: district <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development planning prioritization targeting 	- rapid, ad hoc, assessments	- sentinel site surveillance	- M&E of specific intervention programmes (usually externally driven)
level 3: national <ul style="list-style-type: none"> policy formulation development of national FS/N strategies, programmes budget prioritization fundraising 	- repeated national surveys (nutrition, hh budget, agric, ..) - census - baseline assessment - analytical studies - research	- national routine statistics - monitoring and surveillance of programmes	-M&E of specific intervention programmes -Impact assessment
level 4: global <ul style="list-style-type: none"> advocacy global initiatives cross-country comparison fundraising 	-United Nations agencies' international data banks -Global assessments studies	-global studies on trend analyses	- M&E on intervention programmes

The majority of AME efforts in the systematic search for information, and development of methods and tools therein, have responded to the demand of the actors and actions at the levels 3 and 4 (i.e. national and global action). However, much less strategic focus has been placed to actors and actions at the first 2 levels where the primary responsibility for action lies in support of the populations and their district-level authorities. Experience shows that more emphasis needs to be placed on the 'action' part and less on the 'information' side.

The TF's role will be that of identifying useful modes of action linked to the identified indicators, and may commission review work leading to linking each of the cells in the table above to examples of good practice in terms of indicator-based or evidence-based action.

D.3 Liaise closely with and provide support to SCN Task Forces, SCN Working Groups, and relevant interagency and agency activities

As mentioned above, the role of the TF-AME should not be that of 'reinventing the wheel'. Much is taking place in terms of AME work, both in humanitarian and development settings. In its effort to harmonize and capitalize upon existing AME work, the TF needs to liaise closely with a number of actors. This would entail as a first step reviewing the approach and working methods adopted by the other two cross-cutting SCN Task Forces (Advocacy/Communication and Integrated Approaches), the SCN WGs' work plans, and offering support on issues related to AME. Other relevant interagency and agency initiatives outside the SCN with whom close liaison is key, include:

- IASC Clusters working on assessment tools (e.g. Post-Disaster Needs Assessment-PDNA managed by UNDP under the auspices of the Early Warning Cluster and the Assessment Sub-Working Group of the IASC Nutrition Cluster)

- FAO Nutrition Division-led D-group on “Bridging Food Security and Nutrition Indicators” (mentioned below)
- Other agency work on linking nutrition with food security and livelihoods (IFAD?)
- the Humanitarian Health and Nutrition Tracking Service (HNNTS)
- inter-agency work on developing a standard way of classifying food insecurity (e.g. based on the Integrated Phase Classification System – IPC)
- OCHA CAP-NAF
- Post-Conflict Needs Assessment (PCNA) managed by the World Bank.

D.4 Set up an information exchange mechanism

Several options (to be agreed upon by the Task Force members) include:

- an email forum/fora
- formal web-based forum - existing sites could be used, including the SCN website or the FAO-led Global FSN Forum or the FAO Nutrition Division-led D-group on ‘Bridging Food Security and Nutrition Indicators’
- newsletters
- periodic meetings, ad-hoc meetings

E. Immediate steps to be taken during November 2007 – February 2008 in preparation of the 35th Session of SCN (Hanoi/Vietnam)

1. Establish an official list of members on the TF (see attached list of proposed members)
2. Circulate the above mentioned objectives and activities amongst TF members and start a discussion on:
 - other suggested objectives, outputs and activities
 - specific outputs, impacts and outcomes to be achieved by the TF
 - TF’s operational mode and structure
 - inputs (i.e. who will do what, how and in relation to whom)
 - resources (i.e. what is available, what can be mobilized, including staff and funding)

The above process would take the form of a facilitated discussion (by FAO and WFP Co-chairpersons). Outputs would be:

- a 2008-10 work plan and terms-of reference for the TF-AME (by mid December)
 - activity “D1” above: a tentative list of core indicators proposed for review by other agencies (by end January/early February);
 - preliminary identification of broad AME needs among SCN’s WGs and TFs, UNDP & UN specialist agencies and their bilateral partners, World Bank, CGIAR institutions, and relevant interagency initiatives, and initial steps towards addressing these needs in a coordinated manner (by end February 2008);
 - initiate an exchange forum (by end February 2008)
 - proposed 2008-2010 work plan (end Feb 2008)
3. One or more facilitated e-mail lists, teleconferences and perhaps a face-to-face meeting will be required to pursue the process.

Annex 4

Claudine's powerpoint