Integrated Food Security
Phase Classification

IPC in Brief

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Global Partners

FAO · WFP World Food Programme · Oxfam · Save the Children · FEWS NET Famine Early Warning Systems Network · care · JRC European Commission

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IPC in Brief

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a **technical approach** that aims at providing decision makers with **timely, reliable and accessible information about the food security situation**.

The IPC is developed by an innovative **multi-agency partnership** of **eight major UN agencies and international NGOs**: *CARE International, the Joint Research Center of the European Commission, FAO, FEWS NET, Oxfam GB, Save the Children (UK&US), WFP* that have joined forces to promote a 'common language' to characterize the food security situation, and more appropriate and effective policies and responses to food insecurity.

This common effort has enabled the development of the **IPC toolkit** which consists of an **analysis framework**, **set of tools** and **protocols** to integrate pre-existing food security information and classify food security situations at the national and sub national levels according to a standardized scale.

Besides the tool itself, the **IPC** is also a **process** which brings key food security organizations and governments to work collectively and come to a technical consensus.

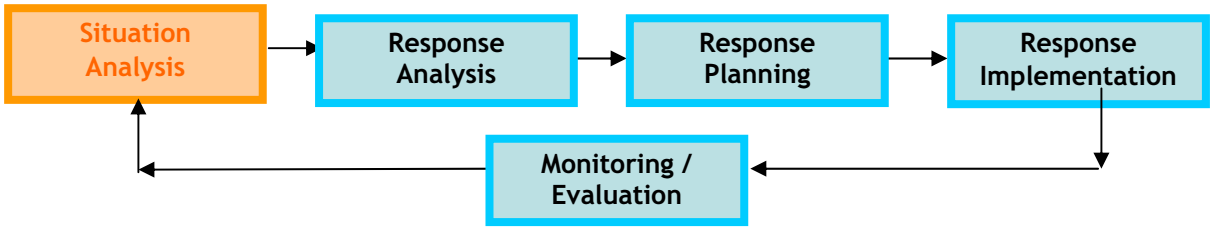
The IPC products provide a **synthetic picture of the nature and scale of the food security situation** in easily understandable formats.

Overall, the IPC facilitates the kind of **coordination and dialogue** that is vital for a **common understanding of food security situation** and the **effective response**

1. What is the IPC?

The IPC focuses on a crucial, yet often neglected, stage within the "Analysis-Response Continuum" which provides consistent **analysis of the food security situation**.

Analysis-Response Continuum and the IPC focus:



The IPC **analysis framework** and **set of protocols** enable to organize and analyze existing information on food security, nutrition and livelihoods at national and sub national levels.

The IPC analysis **process** involves all the stakeholders concerned with food security who literally sit around a same table, share their data, analysis and expertise to **define a unique and common analysis** of the food security situation.

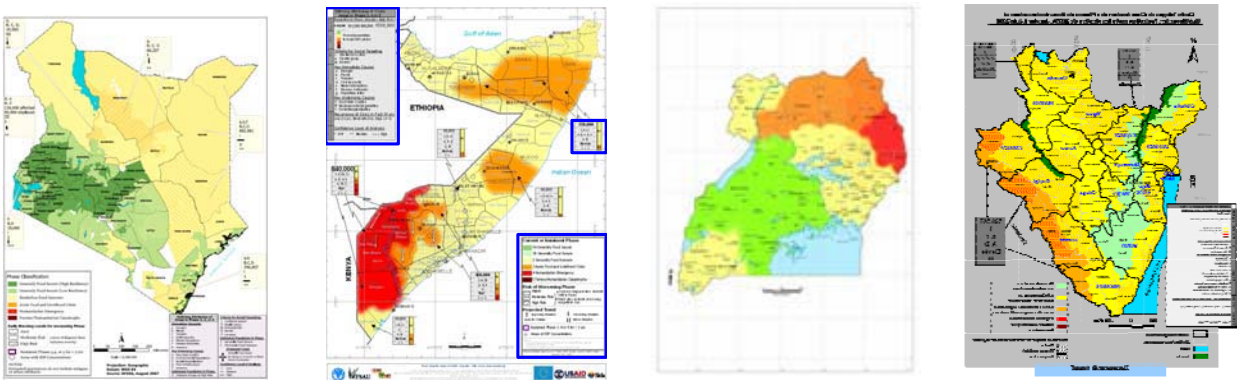
The IPC is designed to not replace but **build on existing information systems** in any given country and help make the most **rigorous, consistent** and **meaningful use of the data and information** available.

The IPC is…	The IPC is not…
• An analytical framework to classify the severity of the food security situations; • A set of tools to integrate existing information and data and get the "big picture" considering the different contexts; • A process/ « forum » to look together at evidence and reach technical consensus.	• An assessment or information system – but an 'add-on' to the existing information systems; • A methodology – it builds on several methodologies; • Response analysis protocol – it is primarily a tool for situation analysis and implications for interventions.

2. How does the IPC represent the situation analysis?

The main and tangible outcomes of the IPC analysis are final **operational maps** which present the food security situation along with its immediate and underlying causes. Furthermore, the IPC maps also provide early warning information and projected trends, so that donors and planners have time to act before a crisis deteriorates even further.

Example of the IPC Maps - Kenya, Somalia, Uganda, Burundi -



3. Why the IPC?

In the food security sector, there is a **lack of clarity on the food security situations**. This is a problem especially because of the situations varying from more to less severe, and may have important implications for the humanitarian action or policy development. In fact:

- The way in which the situation is analyzed determines the type of response, as well as the allocation of resources, the timing of the intervention and the roles played by the various interested parts.
- The absence of well-established standards to classify the severity of food insecurity by all the actors at the time of interventions, could affect the analysis of the needs.
- These problems can lead to imprecise or gross misallocations of scarce resources and, in the worst-case, even loss of lives.

The problem…	The added value of the IPC…
Food security analysis faces the following constraints: • Lack of common language; • Inability to compare crises over time and across countries; • Lack of credibility of some assessments; • Lack of a clear links between situational analysis and the different response options; • Difficulty to convince decision-makers (governments, donors etc...).	• The principal actors from different sectors agree and adopt a common system of classification to produce a consensus of the food security situation; • Comparability is produced by using international recognised standards for classification of food security; • The resulting consensus on the food security situation provides donors with a concise understanding of the situation so that they can take more strategic decisions • Organisations have an objective tool to influence decisions

4. How is the IPC used?

For a given geographical area (region, country or more confined zone), the IPC classifies the food security situation according to 5 levels, called "phases", which represents different levels of severity: 1) *Generally Food Secure*, 2) *Moderate/Borderline Food Insecure*, 3) *Acute Food and livelihood Crisis*, 4) *Humanitarian Emergency*, et 5) *Famine/Humanitarian Catastrophe*.

The indicators used to classify the situation look at the multidimensional aspects of food security (**multi-sectorial indicators**):

- Crude mortality rate
- Acute malnutrition
- Stunting
- Food Access/ availability
- Stunting
- Dietary diversity
- Water access/ availability
- Structural
- Coping
- Livelihood assets
- Civil security
- Hazards

Phase		General Description
1A	Generally Food Secure	Usually adequate and stable food access with moderate to low risk of sliding into Phase 3, 4, or 5.
1B	Generally Food Secure	
2	Moderately / Borderline Food Insecure	Borderline adequate food access with recurrent high risk (due to probable hazard events and high vulnerability) of sliding into Phase 3, 4, or 5.
3	Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis	Highly stressed and critical lack of food access with high and above usual malnutrition and accelerated depletion of livelihood assets that, if continued, will slide the population into Phase 4 or 5 and / or likely result in chronic poverty.
4	Humanitarian Emergency	Severe lack of food access with excess mortality, very high and increasing malnutrition, and irreversible livelihood asset stripping
5	Famine / Humanitarian Catastrophe	Extreme social upheaval with complete lack of food access and / or other basic needs where mass starvation, death, and displacement are evident

Additionally, the IPC considers the possibility that conditions may deteriorate by evaluating the probability and the severity of the risks (called "Risk of Worsening Phase") at three levels: Watch, Moderate Risk and High Risk.

How do we approach the analysis?

IPC analysts work together with the national representatives of a given country. They gather all available food security information (or evidence), to make a 'Phase classification' and/or 'Risk of Worsening Phase' statement. Thus, the IPC analysis relies on and encourages multiple data and sources providing a 'convergence of evidence' to get the overall food security situation.

The IPC **Tools and Protocols** are as follows:

- *Analysis templates* facilitate the classification and the analysis and allow recording all the data and analysis on which is built the final classification;
- *Maps and their legends* give a great deal visual information of how severe is the FS situation;
- *Population Tables* enable to show number of people affected by food insecurity.

The two main elements of the IPC are as follows:

1. ***Analysis of the situation*** is the basis for identifying fundamental aspects of a situation: *severity of the situation, geographic extent, immediate causes, underlying causes, identification of general needs;*
2. ***Response analysis*** explicitly links situation analysis to design appropriate strategic food security interventions. It aims at bridging the gap between vulnerability, needs assessment and decision making by promoting a broad range of responses.

- The IPC looks at the complete range of the various food situations – from generally food secure to famine - classifying the situation according to 5 phases;
- It considers the multi-dimensional nature of food security issues (access to and availability of food, livelihood, access to water, health, nutrition etc).
- It indicates a range of interventions to address the food security issues considered for each phase, and not only in case of emergency.

4. What is the IPC intended and used for?

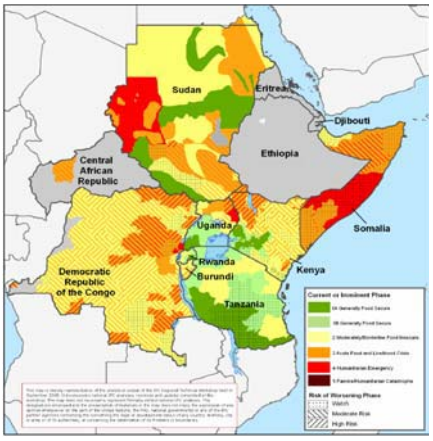
1. Technical consensus and a common language: all the concerned stakeholders use a common set of standards and definitions for classifying the severity of diverse food security scenarios and their impact on human lives and livelihoods.

2. Trend Analysis to improve interventions programming and allocation of resources

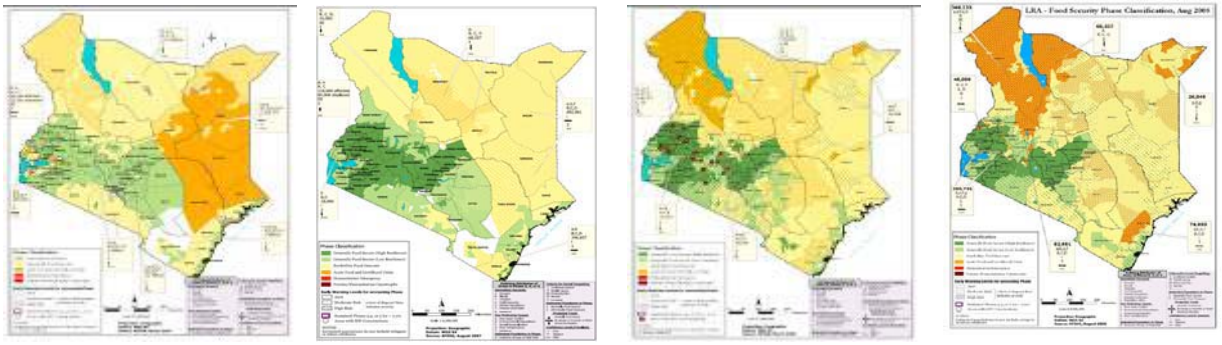
Comparability over space…: Using international/standardized criteria to classify the food crises, the IPC will ultimately make possible to compare the severity of the situation in one place with the other. Thus, decision makers can allocate the resources to the populations in most need. *(IPC Map IPC in East and Central Africa*).

...and comparability over time: the IPC also helps to track the severity of crises over the time. Thus enabling decision makers to widen, reduce or change strategically the area of the interventions (*IPC Map in Kenya)*.

IPC Est/Central Africa, Sept 08



IPC Maps Kenya: February 2007 - March 2007 - June 2008 - August 2008



3. Transparency and accountability: the final maps, as well as all the sources that are used to develop them, are recorded and put in the public domain.

4. Improvement of data quality and availability: When data is insufficient, outdated or of poor quality, the IPC application may highlight these gaps, thus improving the availability and quality of food security data.

5. Effective Communication: By providing a snapshot of the food security situation in a certain country, the maps allow to convey information effectively to the end users such as donors, decision-makers, or the media in a visually compelling and understandable way.

In conclusion, by ensuring **a close link between information and response**, the ultimate objective of the IPC is to promote strategic interventions: the accuracy, the transparency and the comparability guaranteed by the IPC support the decision makers.

6. Where the IPC is now and where it is heading?

The IPC has been piloted or is being progressively adopted in several countries in the **Great Horn of Africa, Western and Southern Africa and Asia**.

- The IPC has been adopted and is in regular usage in **Burundi**, **Cote d'Ivoire**, **Kenya**, **Somalia**, **South Sudan as well as in Nepal**. Several countries have also undergone IPC technical training and are moving towards producing operational maps in **Democratic Republic of Congo**, **Uganda**, and **Tanzania**.
- In Asia, IPC pilots have been conducted in the context of Food Security Assessments in **Indonesia**, **Cambodia** and **Sri-Lanka**. In Central Asia and Middle East, IPC has been piloted in **Tajikistan** and in **Iraq**.
- IPC awareness-raising events to provide technical training and initial support in adopting the IPC has begun in **several other countries** in East and Central Africa, Southern and Western Africa and Central and South-East Asia.

7. Who is behind the IPC?

The **global effort** to develop a common approach for food security analysis and response is led by **eight major UN agencies and international NGOs**: *CARE International, the Joint Research Center of the European Commission, FAO, FEWS NET, Oxfam GB, Save the Children (UK&US), WFP.*

The multi-agency partnership supports the IPC by several coordination bodies acting at the international, regional and national level.

- The **global development** of the IPC is supported by the IPC Steering Committee and by a Coordination Unit which gather representatives from each IPC partner;
- At **regional level**, the IPC is overseen by Support Teams composed of agency food security advisors and linked with existing regional food security networks or entities;
- At the **national level**, inter-ministerial and multi-agency working groups support the introduction and implementation of the IPC.

Kenya Experience

*Kenya was the first country to apply the IPC outside of Somalia - first country to use and develop the IPC. Nowadays, the Kenyan government with the support of key international and national experts has fully taken the lead in conducting the IPC analysis at country level thereby ensuring a clear **understanding and ownership of the IPC results**.*

To ensure the technical quality development and implementation of the IPC, a **Global Technical Working Group** constitutes the main advisory body which gathers technical feedback and provides guidance on the field application of the IPC at both agency and regional levels.

For further information…

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