

**FAO Position Paper on IPC Technical Addendum  
IPC Technical Review Process, Stage 1**

FAO proposes a number of amendments for the Technical Addendum of the IPC Technical Manual, Version 1.

In proposing the following structural revisions and technical clarifications it is noted:

- The proposed changes incorporate **lessons learned** from the application of the IPC outside of its initial development context in Somalia, particularly at country and regional level in East and Central Africa. Findings of the international technical review conducted in March 2007 are also considered, involving the inputs of over one hundred and forty experts and twenty agencies.
- The proposed changes reflect a high degree of **consensus** between national governments and partner agencies involved in IPC development. At this point proposed changes have been limited to those areas where immediate revisions and clarifications are required relating to Version 1 of the IPC Technical Manual. During 2008 a revised technical manual will be released, incorporating outstanding technical concerns.
- Moving forward, there is a need to ensure that technical changes are **piloted on field based experience and expertise**. To this end a number of proposed addendum items require further testing.

**Structural Revisions**

1. *Clarify focus of the IPC*

**Proposed Change:** Endorse a name change to **Integrated Food Security Phase Classification** instead of **Integrated Food Security and Humanitarian Phase Classification**. Clarify the relevance of the IPC approach and revised Technical Addendum to a range of food security contexts covering non-crisis and crisis situations.

**Rationale:**

- *Food Security as a Common Entry Point:* The common entry point to the IPC amongst all stakeholders is food security. In developing the IPC attention has focussed on providing a standardized approach for food security classification, where the nature and severity of food security is explained across diverse crisis contexts.
- *Rigor and Relevance across Crisis and Non-Crisis Situations:* The IPC is orientated to classify the nature, severity and projected trend of food insecurity building on evidence based analysis. Technical revisions have stressed the need to strengthen both ends of the crisis scale to ensure the analysis is robust and operationally-relevant, particularly beyond the humanitarian context.
- *Promoting linkages with related initiatives:* Clarifying the focus of the IPC will facilitate improved linkages with related initiatives. This includes upstream initiatives informing the IPC (e.g. information systems, agency sponsored assessments, health and nutrition tracking system etc.) and downstream initiatives informed by the IPC (e.g. OCHA Needs Analysis Framework, IASC Clusters, UN DAF).

**Technical Revisions Required**

- Name of the IPC is changed to Integrated Food Security Phase Classification.

- An explanatory addendum detailing the rationale and continued relevance of the IPC across crisis and non-crisis contexts.

2. *Re-label Phase Classification 2*

**Proposed Change:** Label Phase Two of the phase classification to 'borderline food insecure' instead of 'chronically food insecure'.

**Rationale:**

- *Consistency:* The change is required to introduce a consistent severity index throughout the phase classification and to diffuse confusion around the inclusion of chronic aspects in the IPC

Phase Name	Generally Food Secure	Borderline Food Insecure	Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis	Humanitarian Emergency	Famine/ Humanitarian Catastrophe
Phase Number	1	2	3	4	5

- *Addressing Chronic Factors more Systematically:* Up to now the inclusion of a 'chronic' phase has generated confusion amongst analysts at country and regional level, since it appeared to introduce temporal/structural aspects of a crisis only in the second phase. This led to difficulties of interpretation across the classification, as well as criticism that chronic dimensions of food insecurity should be incorporated more systematically within the IPC. These issues were identified as major stumbling blocks in early applications within Kenya and Burundi; regional awareness raising events and the international technical review consultations in March 2007.
- *Terminology:* In selecting the term 'borderline food insecure' a number of alternatives were also discussed including 'borderline food secure'; 'moderately food secure'; 'transitory food insecure'. The term borderline was selected since (i) it was most consistent with the definition of phase 2 food insecure was the most consistent with the following definition of phase 2 i.e. 'borderline adequate food access with recurrent high risk (due to probable hazard events and high vulnerability) of sliding into Phase 3, 4 or 5 (ii) it suggested a greater urgency in terms of promoting appropriate responses for the food insecure.

**Technical Revisions Required:**

- The phase classification will be re-labelled in future IPC adaptations as 'borderline food insecure'. The definition, key reference outcome indicators and strategic response framework will remain unchanged during stage one of the revision process.

3. *Increase sensitivity at lower end of classification*

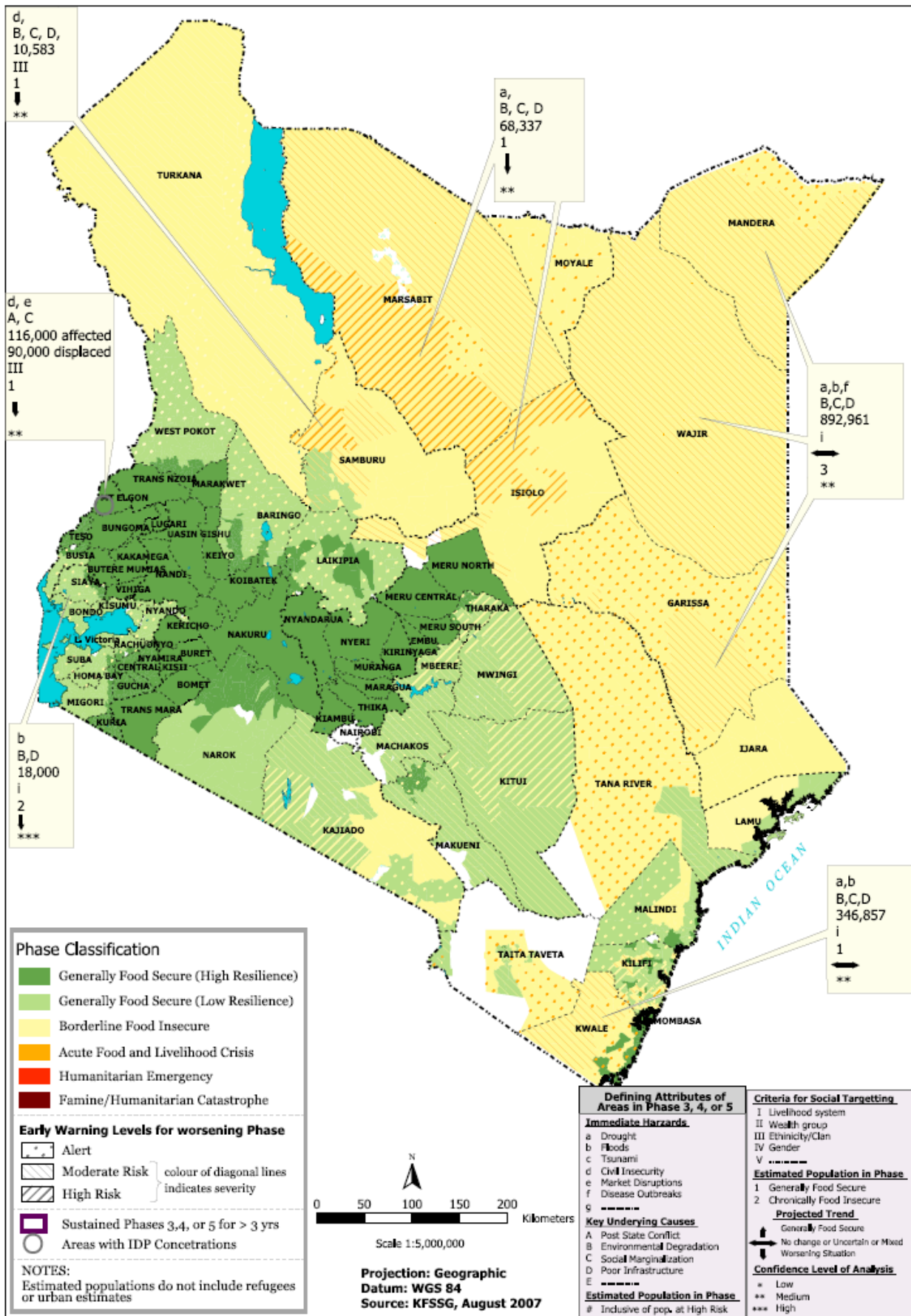
**Proposed Change:** The current Phase 1 'Generally Food Secure' should include an optional split divided into 1A: Generally Food Secure High Resilience and 1B: Generally Food Secure Low Resilience. In terms of representation on the IPC map, 1A could be coloured green and 1B could be light green.

**Rationale**

- *Relevance to diverse crisis contexts:* There is a need to introduce some sensitivity in the phase classification so that it is more meaningful in contexts beyond its original development

context in Somalia i.e. protracted humanitarian crisis. The above option draws from experiences within Kenya in the short and long rains assessments during 2007. Here the break down of phase 1 into two further categories was motivated to show the variation within a given phase driven by different livelihood capitals. Refer to Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Kenya Food Security Situation Analysis: March to June 2007 (Pilot Kenya IPC)**



- *Conceptual basis:* The distinguishing term ‘resilience’ is proposed since it refers to the capability of households to absorb the negative effects of unpredictable shocks or disasters, rather than predicting the occurrence of a crisis (as in the case of most vulnerability literature). In this sense resilience captures the dynamic nature of food security.
- *Piloting for an additional phase:* The split of Phase 1 provides the opportunity for further piloting, with a view to eventually introducing a new phase based on further feedback from field applications.

#### **Technical Revisions Required**

- Qualitative description to define the concept of resilience
- Definition of indicators and thresholds to differentiate between low and high resilience building on livelihood capitals and drawing from current implementation experiences in Kenya.

#### 4. *Integrate temporal aspects of crisis more systematically in IPC analysis*

**Proposed Change:** Include a Recurrent Crisis Scale within the Key Defining Attributes call out box, categorising proneness to crisis within a particular area/livelihood zone during the previous ten years. This may be defined by categorising the total number of years during which a crisis event has been experienced e.g. less than two years (low); between two and five years (medium) and greater than five years (high). Further options emerging from the consultations of the Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group could also be considered.

#### **Rationale:**

- *Integration of Temporal Aspects:* Given the re-labelling of phase 2 there is a need to account for the temporal dimensions of crisis more systematically in the phase classification and cartographic protocols.
- *Relevance for Decision Makers:* A scale which measures proneness to crisis in a particular area is meaningful to decision makers to understand the historical context of an area and given phase classification.
- *Distinctions with ‘sustained phase’ in key defining attribute call out box:* Importantly, this scale should not be confused with the existing cartographic indicator which charts ‘sustained phase 3, 4 or 5 for over 3 years’. The ‘recurrent crisis scale’ would be cumulative in nature for over the period of a decade.

#### **Technical Revisions Required:**

- Develop a recurrent crisis scale that identifies proneness to crisis related to Phases 3 to 5 of the classification.
- Review recommendations emerging from Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group linked to the same issue, but also considering linkages to Phase 2.
- Clarify how the recurrent crisis scale will relate to the ‘sustained phase’

#### 5. *Elaborate on Ownership and Process Issues around IPC system at country level*

**Proposed Change:** Include the inter-agency guiding principles outlining an agreed approach to develop a common IPC system at country level. Provide an elaboration on these principles to stress in particular the role of the government and the process underlying an IPC analysis.

#### **Rationale**

- *Guiding Principles for IPC Process:* In developing and implementing the IPC a number of lead food security agencies have agreed to adhere to a set of guiding/working principles for

operating the IPC within a country (Table 1)<sup>1</sup>. The guiding principles elaborate on how the IPC could be applied outside of the original development context in Somalia, particularly taking into account the imperatives of national ownership and underlying processes.

**Table 1: Guiding principles for operating within a country in the framework of a common interagency approach**

1. The implementation of the IPC should be a consensus process facilitated by a broad interagency working group, including government and key constituencies.
2. All efforts should be made to engage and build capacity of government and promote ownership and strengthen the institutional process.
3. Collaborating IPC agencies should strive to maintain internationally-agreed standards for IPC analysis, even during the development stage, so as not to lose the potential for regional and global comparison of results.
4. The timing of analysis should be linked to events/critical seasons that affect food security situation. The entry point might be a multi-agency planning event.
5. There should be commitment by members of inter-agency working group to multi-year process.
6. The implementation of IPC processes should be demand driven by government where possible.
7. IPC can be started regardless of data availability. The initial situation analysis will be useful and improved as the process proceeds and will highlight key information gaps to be filled.
8. Any data used should contain confidence rankings.
9. IPC process should comprise a mechanism to build an institutional commitment from government.
10. To promote transparency, the results of IPC analysis should be made available to the public in a timely manner.
11. IPC analysis should be done with technical neutrality through having a broad membership of the interagency group and through a transparent process of consensus building and ensuring group members participate in their technical capacity.
12. IPC results should be subject to an external peer review process to check quality and maintain standards.
13. The IPC should be developed as an iterative learning process, in which collaboration agencies commit to document practice and lessons learned.
14. The leadership of IPC processes in countries should be decided by the interagency group in-country based on both comparative advantages and responsibilities (e.g. Government leadership).
- 14: The IPC should be used to engage/advocate with donors to make decisions according to need.

#### **Technical Revisions Required**

- Include IPC Guiding Principles agreed by multi-agency implementing partners.
- Elaborate on key aspects related to ownership and underlying process, more clearly detailing the role of national government and local authorities.

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<sup>1</sup> This includes CARE International, EC JRC, FAO, FEWS NET, Oxfam GB, and Save the Children UK and US, WFP

6. *Clarify and provide additional information on the use of Key Reference Outcome indicators.*

**Proposed Change:** Correct blatant errors and provide additional clarifications on the use of recommended Key Reference Outcome indicators. Identify priority areas where further consultation and analysis is required for changing Key Reference Outcome Indicators.

**Rationale:**

- *Scope of Changes during Phase 1:* Significant debate has arisen concerning the use and interpretation of key reference outcome indicators. During Phase 1 of the revision process FAO proposes that changes should be of limited scope i.e. addressing areas where blatant errors exist in Version 1 of the Technical Manual and providing clarifications in interpretation.
- *Further Consultation and Testing:* Changes to remaining Key Reference Outcome indicators should occur through a consultative process, combining feedback from relevant experts and further field testing.

**Technical Revisions Required:**

- Correction of Blatant Errors
  - Clarify threshold for Under 5 Years of Age Mortality Rate used in the Phase Classification and Reference Manual. The guidance currently varies.
- Clarification in Use and Interpretation
  - Clarify what thresholds should be used to measure Crude Mortality Rate across each phase classifications. In emergency contexts, crude mortality might typically be measured based on the number of deaths per 10,000 per day. In stable contexts, CMR might be measured by the number of deaths per 1,000 live births.
  - Include a stunting threshold rate in the acute food and livelihood crisis phase.
  - Clarify to what extent disease can be measured in the current phase classification.
- Future Priorities for Consultation and Testing
  - Moving forward the entire list of Key Reference Outcome indicators could be considered for refinement in the Version 2 of the IPC Technical Manual. Inputs from WFP provide a good start to the identification of priority areas. From the FAO perspective improved measurement of the following outcomes might be considered:
    - *Food Access:* The 2100 Kcal outcome indicator cannot be measured systematically at household level, so guidance is required in terms of its measurement. Guidance can be provided based on the existing approaches of FSAU and Kenya, where consideration of underlying livelihood assets and strategies are explicitly incorporated.
    - *Dietary Diversity:* The harmonization of thresholds for dietary diversity at different phase levels should be considered in light of the different approaches used by agencies (WFP, FAO and UNICEF in particular).
    - *Disease* (and the definition of pandemic and endemic indicators) should be revised.

7. *Revise analysis templates, particularly clarifying on evidence base and early warning aspects.*

**Proposed Change:** Provide simplified analysis templates which include the following amendments (i) merging of direct and indirect evidence columns (ii) facility to highlight direct evidence sources (iii) add additional column to document evidence base for early warning statement

**Rationale:**

- *Emphasis on Analysis:* Feedback from regional workshops has stressed the need to promote greater emphasis on the analytical process underlying the IPC process. To this end greater clarification is required around the use of the analysis templates.
- *Simplifying the presentation of analysis:* A key concern is to simplify the presentation of the analysis, removing any difficulties in interpretation. The merging of direct and indirect evidence columns is helpful in this regard, assuming that direct evidence sources can be highlighted in some way given their significance.
- *Elaborating on Early Warning Aspects:* The reformulation of analysis templates provides an opportunity to provide more information on the justification for early warning levels.

**Technical Revisions Required:**

- Revised analysis templates taking into account the recommendations from above.

8. *Projected trend*

**Proposed Change:** Put the current arrow showing 'projected trend' on the cartographic protocols directly on the map for a given crisis area.

**Rationale:**

- Feedback has stressed the need to account for historical and trend patterns in clearer detail.

**Technical Revisions Required:**

- Consider the projected trend arrow in new versions of cartographic analysis

**Technical Clarifications**

- **Linkages between Situation Analysis and Response:** There is a need to clarify the scope of IPC concerning situation and response analysis, and what linkages exist. Building on exercises within Somalia and Kenya there is an opportunity to elaborate on the definition of response analysis and to reinforce the degree to which IPC can inform this.
- **Data requirements and interpretation:** The use and interpretation of different indicators is a key issue in IPC analysis. Feedback from WFP has focussed on providing a Data Availability Index. Given the level of detail and novel nature of this proposal, further reflection is needed

– particularly to see how it can be simplified. In the interim ideas on how to use/ interpret available data is required.

- **Emphasising Convergence of Analysis:** In the analysis and interpretation of indicators the guiding IPC principle is to use a range of indicators that lead to a 'generally correct' rather than 'precisely wrong' analysis. This means using the IPC approach for sound analytical conclusions backed by evidence rather than a narrowed debate on 'right' thresholds and weighting systems. Additional clarification is therefore required on how to operationalise convergence of analysis. Moving forward the 'convergence of evidence' concept could be detailed in advance of the key reference table, so that the methodological aspects are given some analytical context also.