The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a set of analytical tools, and processes, to analyse and classify the severity of acute and chronic food insecurity situation according to scientific international standards.

It aims at providing decision makers with a rigorous analysis of food insecurity in both emergency and development contexts, and key objectives for response to better coordinate the interventions.

The IPC tools and procedures are compatible with whatever data collection systems, methodological approaches, and institutional arrangements exist in-country, and allow comparison of findings over time and across countries.

IPC is also a forum involving Government, UN, NGOs and civil society that conduct joint food security analysis to reach technical consensus on the nature and severity of food insecurity in their country.

By using the IPC standardized acute and chronic scales and currency, key stakeholders work together to consolidate wide-ranging evidence on food insecure populations and answer the following questions:

- How severe is the situation?
- Where are the areas that are food insecure?
- How many are the food insecure people?
- What are the key driving factors?

**IPC Core Functions**

1. **Promotion of Technical Consensus**
   - To ensure key stakeholders from government, NGOs, UN and academic agencies concur with the technical findings of the analysis.

2. **Common Scale**
   - To classify complex information and data into meaningful categories and enable comparability of results from place to place and over time.

3. **Communication for Action**
   - To consolidate essential conclusions for decision makers in an accessible and consistent format.

4. **Quality Control Assurance**
   - To assure the validity and reliability of the analysis.
IPC makes a distinction between acute and chronic food insecurity. The IPC-Acute scale categorizes the severity of acute food insecurity into Five Phases. The IPC-Chronic scale classifies persistent food insecurity according to Four Levels. Each of these phases and levels has important and distinct implications for where and how best to intervene and therefore influences priority response objectives.

IPC-Acute phases and IPC-Chronic levels are determined by analyzing a range of outcomes based on international standards including food consumption levels, livelihoods changes, nutritional status, and mortality. These are triangulated with several contributing factors (food availability, access, utilization and stability, vulnerability and hazards) and analyzed within local contexts.

The IPC Acute and Chronic classifications are based on a convergence of all of this evidence and functions essentially like a thermometer that takes the 'temperature' of how the food insecurity situation is evolving. But its more than just the temperature. IPC indicates the changing of a food insecure situation and, critically, changes in the required responses.

The IPC approach is designed to be applicable in any context irrespective of the type of food insecurity, hazard, socio-economic, livelihood, institutional or data context.

Once fully implemented, it has a very modest and efficient cost, and plays a unique and crucial role. Each IPC Acute Phase and IPC Chronic Level is linked to priority strategic response objectives and indicates how severe the situation is, the exact area that is affected, what part of the population is acutely and/or chronically food insecure, and the basic characteristics.

The results are consolidated into the IPC Acute/Chronic Food Insecurity Overviews which include the key findings of the analysis, the IPC map communicating the food insecurity situation and all the evidence in support of the classification.

How is IPC used?

Overall, the IPC process is also used to strengthen existing institutions and provides a platform for sharing information and enabling diverse stakeholders to work together.

Trend Analysis to improve interventions programming and allocation of resources.

Comparability over space...: Using international - standardized criteria to classify acute and chronic food insecurity, the IPC will ultimately make possible to compare the situation in one place with the other. Thus, decision makers can allocate the resources to the populations in most need.

...and comparability over time: IPC also helps to track the severity of the situations over the time. Thus enabling decision makers to widen, reduce or change strategically the area of the interventions.
What is the IPC contribution to decision-making?

IPC contributes to greater transparency and coordination of interventions and to accountability of decision makers.

Often decision-makers are forced to respond quickly to food security crises without enough information about the situation or the most appropriate actions in a country. IPC-Acute is an innovative and vital approach that fills a crucial gap in this regard by providing accurate and accessible analysis of the developing stages of food insecurity crises.

IPC-Chronic informs decision making for resolving more long-term, structural hindrances to achieving sustainable food security.

Additionally, at regional level the IPC offers the opportunity to look at cross-border dynamics of food insecurity and gives a broad perspective on how the severity of food insecurity in one country affects the severity in another country.

Where is the IPC now?

The IPC is now being used in over 25 countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia that are at different degree of IPC implementation and adoption.

IPC is used by Partners as a scientific reference to state the severity of the food insecurity in a common voice.

IPC ensured good coordination and targeting of humanitarian assistance, and a joint monitoring of the situation in several cases such as:

- South Sudan Famine, 2017
- South Sudan Emergency, 2015
- Central Africa Republic Emergency, 2014
- Somalia Famine, 2011

What is the IPC contribution to decision-making?

Countries with advance implementation and adoption of IPC, and are in the process of consolidating capacities.

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Haiti, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Yemen, Zimbabwe, Uganda.

Consolidation Stage

Countries where IPC is newly introduced, with limited/no IPC technical capacity, production of IPC products and their use by decision makers.

Cambodia, Guatemala, Haiti, El Salvador, Ethiopia, India, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Mozambique, Rwanda, Zambia, Swaziland.

Introduction Stage

Countries where IPC application is relevant and where IPC introduction has not yet started, or either stalled or not advanced.

Angola, Belize, Bhutan, Botswana, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nicaragua, Panama, Palestine Territories, Seychelles, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste.

Potential countries for IPC GSP support

Increasing Quality and Capacity...

Other important focuses are the implementation of the IPC Certification Programme to professionalize IPC practitioners and build a pool of IPC Experts at all levels, as well as the IPC Quality and Compliance Review Policy. Also important the promotion of IPC Information Support System (ISS), a web-based application designed to efficiently create, store, and disseminate the IPC analyses and information.

...where is it heading?

Important lessons have been learnt from the application of the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Classification. Various technical issues have also emerged from the implementation of the IPC Chronic Food Insecurity and the IPC Acute Malnutrition Classification. This is laying the foundation for a fully Integrated Food and Nutrition Security Phase Classification System, which will harmonize the three IPC Classification systems and provide countries with a comprehensive framework to analyse the most important types of food insecurity.
The IPC Global Strategic Programme (2014-2018)

To build on the successes achieved to-date, the IPC Partnership has developed and is implementing a multi-year and results-based IPC Global Strategic Programme (2014-2018) that ensures that IPC is adequately supported as an international global standard in the food security field, effectively informing food security policies.

For Further Information
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