

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Tuesday, 27 April 2021 13:00 GMT -04:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Food Security Data and Measurement / Mesure de l'insécurité alimentaire et données connexes
CONVENED BY	Natasha Kim, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy Branch / Sous-ministre adjointe, Direction générale des politiques stratégiques, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada / Agriculture et agroalimentaire Canada
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/14351/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Member State
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Canada

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

1. PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

54

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0	0-18	6	19-30	20	31-50	14	51-65	3	66-80		80+
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PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

19	Male	29	Female	6	Prefer not to say or Other
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

2	Agriculture/crops	10	Education	4	Health care
	Fish and aquaculture	1	Communication		Nutrition
2	Livestock		Food processing	11	National or local government
	Agro-forestry		Food retail, markets		Utilities
1	Environment and ecology	3	Food industry		Industrial
2	Trade and commerce		Financial Services	18	Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

3	Small/medium enterprise/artisan		Workers and trade union
	Large national business		Member of Parliament
	Multi-national corporation	2	Local authority
	Small-scale farmer	18	Government and national institution
	Medium-scale farmer		Regional economic community
	Large-scale farmer		United Nations
10	Local Non-Governmental Organization		International financial institution
2	International Non-Governmental Organization	2	Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
4	Indigenous People	1	Consumer group
12	Science and academia		Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

The Food Policy for Canada, a roadmap to a healthier and more sustainable food system, was built upon extensive multi-stakeholder engagement with a unifying theme of “Everyone at the Table!”. The Principles of Engagement for the Food Systems Summit are aligned with the Food Policy for Canada’s guiding principles and its approach to stakeholder engagement. The Dialogue organizers targeted the discussion questions such that clear deliverables and barriers could be identified for Canada to achieve the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, exhibiting our commitment to the Summit. The discussion questions were broad to allow participants to volunteer their own interpretations and work together to identify concerns and actions. Stakeholders and Indigenous rights holders across the value chain were invited to represent their diverse interests and recognize the complexity of the food system. Other government departments were consulted for input and whom to invite to the Dialogue. Facilitators were provided with UN Food Summit training to encourage making everyone heard and engaged and to foster connections between participants.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The Dialogue complements the outcomes of other dialogues by focusing on data collection and measurement for all aspects of food security. We followed the Chatham House Rule and reminded the participants at the introductory plenary and at the breakout sessions that their statements would be anonymized. Our facilitators were trained to create an inclusive and respectful environment to make sure the multiplicity of voices were captured. Most of the discussion groups were assigned two note takers with the aim of enriching the combined notes. We had government employees acting as facilitators and included a mixture of government employees and student volunteers as note takers. Participants were assigned to discussion groups to ensure a balanced mix of stakeholders and rights holders across the food system. We tied our future statement both to the 2030 UN SDGs and also to the Food Policy for Canada.

DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

Adopting the principles of engagement contributed to improved dialogue outcomes as the principles require diversity, inclusivity, respecting the complexity of discussion topics, and enable participants to share openly.

3. METHOD

The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?

☒ **Yes**

☐ **No**

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

Canada has committed to achieving zero hunger and food security for all Canadians and to achieving food security related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The opening speech of Canada's 2020 parliament (Speech from the Throne) emphasized that every Canadian deserves to have nutritious food on the table. The need to continue working with partners – including directly with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation – to address food insecurity in Canada was also highlighted. With these commitments in place, it is crucial that Canada has the ability to measure progress towards achieving the Food Policy's priority outcomes.

The focus of the Food Security Data and Measurement Dialogue was to identify how current methods of measuring food security can be improved upon in order to better track the achievement of Canada's food security commitments. A key rationale for identifying data and measurement issues is the urgent need to develop appropriate actions targeting vulnerable people so that Canada will be on the path to meeting the SDGs relating to the food system including zero hunger, good health and well-being, responsible production and consumption, and climate action. The Dialogue was motivated by the following future statement:

"By 2030, Canada will have the data needed to assess the ability of all those living in Canada to access sufficient amount of safe, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods. Such data will be used to monitor and track Canada's progress towards achieving SDGs and indicators in the Food Policy for Canada. As a result, progress will be made toward the SDGs."

The future statement was closely aligned with the UN Food Systems Summit Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all by 2030. The Dialogue focused on fostering a diverse discussion with partners, stakeholders and rights holders about how to achieve the future statement. The attendees were specifically asked to provide their perspectives and input on the following four areas: (i) identifying current data gaps, (ii) approaches to close the identified data gaps, (iii) barriers and challenges in meeting the future statement, and (iv) identifying stakeholder and rights holders' roles in meeting the future statement.

ACTION TRACKS

	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

	Finance		Policy
	Innovation		Data & Evidence
	Human rights		Governance
	Women & Youth Empowerment		Trade-offs
			Environment and Climate

MAIN FINDINGS

While participants commended the recent creation of a Food Policy for Canada they stressed the need for key organizational changes and investments into improving both food security related data collection and governance including data dissemination and access. The Dialogue provided a space for participants to share their perspectives about current food security data and measurements and ways to improve them.

Main Finding 1: The role of the federal government in collecting, disseminating, and utilizing data to address food insecurity needs to be well defined and collaborative.

Main Finding 2: There is a need for the federal government to increase investment in data collection methods that reflect the regional variation of food systems and populations across Canada. Increased focus on measuring and monitoring food insecurity within vulnerable populations is needed.

Main Finding 3: Governments and organizations who collect data to measure food insecurity can improve data collection by supporting partnerships with target groups.

Main finding 4: Transparency in the collection, use and dissemination of data needs to be improved. Target groups should be consulted throughout the entire process including survey design, analysis, and providing access to and/or ownership of final data products.

Main Finding 5: There is a need for a food security definition that reflects the complexity of the dimensions of food security in Canada. A clear definition of both food sources and security are important when collecting data and measuring the status of food security.

Main Finding 6: A comprehensive understanding of the interconnectedness of food costing and household income is necessary to understanding the affordability of food.

Main Finding 7: There is a need for up to date, timely data on the current food security situation across Canada.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/3

In discussion groups of up to 10 individuals representing diverse dimensions of Canada’s food systems, participants discussed their perspectives and brainstormed ways to address the identified food security data gaps. Each of the eight groups identified unique data gaps and solutions but many groups identified outcomes under common themes. These key outcomes identified by participants are listed below:

- Establish a federal lead for achieving food security, increase collaboration between departments and fund further data collection.

Many participants felt it would be helpful to have one federal body responsible for food security and the achievement of food security goals. Currently, participants believe there is considerable duplication and incoherency in efforts and as a result progress is being delayed. The lead department or agency should set a clear goal and strive to eliminate food insecurity with strategic milestones that can be gauged for progress over time through performance metrics. Further to setting goals, this government department or agency should take ownership of the process to gather data and develop strategies to foster partnerships with all stakeholders and rights holders by gaining their respect and mutual understanding of the significance of collecting information. This would include cataloguing all existing data that is being collected by stakeholders and rights holders (civil society, non-profit groups, other levels of government, and academia).

- Improve data collection for vulnerable groups. Increasing sample size would help better assess the needs and food security levels of vulnerable groups.

Participants recommended that the federal government increase sample size for marginalized groups when collecting data so programs and policies can be better targeted and assessed. Small sample sizes of marginalized demographic groups lead to an inability to measure the food security status of these demographic groups at a granular level. In particular, participants identified that the federal government needs to investigate ways that Indigenous-led data collection can be supported. Participants suggested that the federal government needs to focus on inclusive design and better reach for underrepresented groups by offering surveys in different languages and delivery methods while respecting their personal experiences. Participants felt that current data collection may exclude marginalized groups, especially online survey collection.

- Develop and support partnerships with food security stakeholders and rights holders.

While partnerships require a more intensive process and more resources, participants believe they would enable a deeper dialogue and understanding of food insecurity. Toward this goal, it was recommended by participants that the government work with stakeholders and rights holders to catalogue current data and measurements. Also, it was recommended that the federal government provide stable funding so that organizations can plan long-term priorities for data collection and invest in their organizations. Local groups have experience with the specific food security issues and can work to build trust within the community.

Regarding Indigenous communities, it was suggested that the federal government needs to better protect and respect Indigenous data sovereignty and support Indigenous-led data collection. Data collection requires dialogue on a nation-to-nation basis to respect community developed data collection and sharing and ownership protocols.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/3

- Defining and measuring food insecurity

Food insecurity is multifaceted and participants felt that in Canada we tend to only focus on affordability and households' financial access to market foods. Restricting the focus to an income-based model neglects the broader cultural considerations and social and geographical barriers to achieving food security. Participants proposed that the definition of food security should be expanded to include access to other alternative food systems (i.e. traditional/country food systems, local harvesting, community food sharing, and food banks) and other closely linked insecurities (i.e. nutritional and water security). The federal government needs to consult those who consume traditional foods to better understand these diets and ensure these food security dimensions are incorporated into surveys.

- Increasing transparency

Participants recommended that the federal government conduct a thorough analysis of food security programs to prove their effectiveness or request academics to undertake such analysis. Participants expressed that currently, they do not know whether programs and funding are actually reducing food insecurity. The linkage between data collection and policy development needs to be transparent. Participants noted that the federal government should improve communication about how data will be used as evidence in policy making when it is collected and provide follow up reports to convey the importance of the communities' participation in data collection. Transparency and communication between the government and both rights holders and stakeholders in collecting data is key for coordinated efforts to advance food security data and measurement.

- Data accessibility

Participants urged governments to work on reducing the time lag between data collection and dissemination. Further, the need for a greater level of data granularity was highlighted. Organizations and researchers urgently need data to track who is most affected by food insecurity, the magnitude of the problem and how it is changing over time.

- Frequent food insecurity data collection

Participants felt that the inconsistent data collection in some provinces and in some years makes it more difficult to identify problems and trends. Therefore, participants urged that the federal government and provinces work together to ensure data is collected annually in order to avoid gaps in the data. The current lack of longitudinal data restricts research into whether the same households are becoming more or less food insecure over time. Thus, a longitudinal survey is needed.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/3

- Canada needs a national food system surveillance system to act as an early warning for food security threats

Participants believed that with appropriate data enhancements Canada could establish a system of data collection and dissemination, with a defined and broad set of food security performance metrics, including nutrition-related data, based on aspirational goals and targets. A key component of timely food security updates is frequent monitoring of food insecurity levels within the population. Participants suggested that after food security data sources are catalogued, the government could support organizations to access this data. One example proposed is a country foods database as a way to capture the availability of country food sources, hunting activity, and monitoring eco-systems.

- Measuring the impact of climate change on food security

Related to the need for a surveillance system, participants expressed the importance of understanding the impact of climate change on food security. Climate change is likely to have an impact on growing food, sustainable practices, and the seasonality of food access for remote communities. Participants recommended that the federal government track the impact of climate change on traditional food sources in remote and Indigenous communities, furthering the need for a country foods database.

- Qualitative data collection

Participants felt that in many areas there is a lack of qualitative data to complement the quantitative data. Qualitative data gaps exist around measuring the personal experience of food insecurity as well as the role of food in economic development and food sovereignty. Participants noted that there needs to be investment in case studies within remote communities who are excluded from current data collection and vulnerable groups who are not well represented in current data collection. Participants noted that case studies would help capture and communicate the experience of individuals and add context to the quantitative data collected.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

While most participant groups came to similar conclusions, there were a few areas of divergence.

- More research and data versus taking immediate action

The most salient area of divergence was between those who focused on the need for more data and those who felt that Canada has enough data and the government needs to take immediate action to eliminate food insecurity. In the same token, some participants noted that this Dialogue was not ambitious enough to address food insecurity issue and that Canada needs to take action now and 2030 is too far away. These participants felt that between now and 2030, Canada needs to have concrete actions implemented to eliminate food insecurity not just to get the right data and measurements.

- Focusing on the collection of standardized data versus region-specific data

Participants identified the need for a standardized methodology across time and place to measure food insecurity. However, some participants noted that there is a need for regional approaches and tailored surveys to specific populations.

- Data on food bank use

The need for more data collection on food bank usage and food insecurity was noted. However, other participants emphasized that, in their view, food banks should not be considered a viable long term solution to food insecurity. As such, they felt that focusing data collection efforts on food banks would be expending effort in the wrong place.

- Focus on income versus a holistic food systems approach

Some participants felt it was important to look at food security as an income issue and focus on making food more affordable and increasing incomes. Others preferred to focus on the broader cultural and geographic barriers impacting food insecurity.

- Food waste data

Some participants felt that more data collection was needed related to food waste. Other participants felt that food waste and food security are separate issues. While there is some overlap between the two issues, these participants did not feel that a focus on food waste would significantly help advance food security objectives.

- Expanding the definition of food security

Many participants believed the definitions of food insecurity needed to be expanded. This included a greater focus on non-market foods and cultural foods, issues of food sovereignty and the inclusion of nutrition and water security. There were, however, divergent opinions about which aspects should be prioritized and included.

- Timely data versus quality data

Many participants noted the need for timely data collection and dissemination, especially due to how quickly the food security situation changed during COVID-19. However, some participants cautioned against prioritizing speed over quality and coverage. These participants pointed to recent examples such as the quick turn-around online surveys conducted during COVID-19 (the Canadian Perspectives Survey Series); they felt that such a survey with its shortened format and time frames likely excluded marginalized groups.

- The role of government, academia and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

It was identified by most participants that the federal government has a lead role in combatting food insecurity and that one federal department should be in charge of the food security file. Many participants noted that the federal government needs to fund more standardized surveys targeting vulnerable populations. However, some participants identified NGOs as the most appropriate data collectors as they better understand vulnerable populations and can act as knowledge brokers. There was a divergence of views on the data collection approach between those who think that the federal government needs to act as a singular source for food security information and those who believe the role of NGOs should be expanded.

Some believed that more social scientists needed to be hired by government to undertake more food insecurity related research. In contrast, others believe that data should be more accessible so that academia and NGOs can conduct the research themselves instead.

Some participants felt that the federal government has not historically been as respectful as it should have been as data stewards regarding transparency and full accessibility, especially concerning Indigenous populations. There was a divergence of opinions between those advocating for data sovereignty and the need to fund Indigenous-led (as well as NGO-led) data collection; and those who prioritized a centralized, standardized data collection and central sharing system for data. Participants noted that placing more responsibility on NGOs and Indigenous-led organizations may result in overburdening NGOs by involving them too much in constant data collection without additional support.

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Canada's Member State Dialogues**
<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/about-our-department/key-departmental-initiatives/food-policy/leadership-2021-united-nations-food-systems-summit-and-dialogues>
- **Concertations des États membres organisées par le Canada**
<https://agriculture.canada.ca/fr/propos-notre-ministere/initiatives-ministerielles-importantes/politique-alimentaire/leadership-sommet-systemes-alimentaires-nations-unies-2021-concertations>