

Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSANA)

A Policy and Strategic Framework

Final

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFSANA	Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda	MIS	Management Information System (MAIL)
ANDMA	Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority	MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy	MoCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
ARD	Agriculture and Rural Development	MoE	Ministry of Education
CAP	Consolidated Appeal (UN)	MoEC	Ministry of the Economy
CBR	Capacity Building for Results	MoEW	Ministry of Energy and Water
CDC	Community Development Council	MoF	Ministry of Finance
CFW	Cash for Work	MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
CPI	Consumer Price Index	MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
CSO	Central Statistics Organization	MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations	MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
DAIL	Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock	MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
DDA	District Development Assembly	NAF	Nutrition Action Framework
DoE	Directorate of Education	NADF	National Agriculture Development Framework
DoPH	Provincial Department of Public Health	NDMC	National Disaster Management Commission
DRM	Disaster Risk Management	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	NPNPS	National Public Nutrition Policy & Strategy
DRRD	Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development	NPP	National Priority Programme
EC	European Commission	NRAP	National Rural Access Programme
EFSA	Emergency Food Security Assessment	NRVA	National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	NSP	National Solidarity Programme
FEWS-Net	Famine Early Warning Systems Network	NWNRD	National Water and Natural Resource Development
FFL	Food for Life	OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
FFW	Food for Work	PDC	Provincial Development Council
FNS	Food and Nutrition Security	PFNC	Provincial Food and Nutrition Committee
FS	Food Security	PND	Public Nutrition Department (MoPH)
FSAC	Food Security and Agriculture Cluster	PPHD	Provincial Public Health Directorate
FP	Focal Point	SGR	Strategic Grain Reserve
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition	SPS	Social Protection Strategy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	UN	United Nations
GIEWS	Global Information and Early Warning System (FAO)	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
GoIRA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	UNDP	UN Development Programme
HDI	Human Development Index	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
HLFNSC	High Level Food and Nutrition Steering Committee	VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
IDP	Internally Displaced Person	WB	World Bank
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization	WFP	World Food Programme
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification	WHO	World Health Organization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation		
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock		
MDG	Millennium Development Goal		

Executive Summary

Food and nutrition insecurity is pervasive in Afghanistan due to insufficient availability, limited access, poor diets and inadequate utilization of food, and unstable food supplies caused by disasters that render large segments of the population vulnerable. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) recognizes that food and nutrition insecurity results in hunger and malnutrition which negatively impact citizens and national development. Through a number of policies, strategies and programmes, and as party to several international covenants, the GoIRA has expressed its commitment to enhancing food and nutrition security for the Afghan people.

The Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSANA) contains a policy statement by the Government, reaffirming its determination to address the multiple determinants of hunger and malnutrition in a coordinated fashion, and a comprehensive framework with a specific goal and targets, strategic priorities and fields of action, and coordination structures needed to overcome the interrelated challenges of food and nutrition insecurity.

The goal of AFSANA is to ensure that no Afghan suffers from hunger and every Afghan is well-nourished at all times. The strategic objectives are to: (i) assure the availability of sufficient food for all Afghans; (ii) improve economic and physical access to food, especially by vulnerable and food insecure population groups; (iii) ensure stable food supply over time and in disaster situations; and (iv) promote better diets and adequate food utilization particularly by women and children.

Corresponding priority interventions for achieving these objectives are: (i) promotion of domestic food production and stable food imports; (ii) creation of employment and income opportunities, provision of productive and social safety nets and targeted food subsidies; (iii) integration of the strategic grain reserve programs into national response to food emergencies, enhanced household and community resilience against emergencies and development of an integrated framework for disaster preparedness and response; and (iv) improvement in the quality of diets, care and feeding practices for infants and young children and self-care for pregnant women and adolescent girls, assurance of the healthy absorption of nutrients through infections prevention, and improved food safety and quality controls.

AFSANA spells out the roles and responsibilities of government and non-government stakeholders and identifies coordination structures at the central level (i.e. High Level Food and Nutrition Steering Committee chaired by the 2nd Vice President and supported by a Secretariat as well as Focal Points at core ministries and agencies) and at the subnational level (i.e. Provincial Food and Nutrition Committees and, in the interim, District Development Assemblies and Community Development Committees).

Finally, the strategic framework sets out approaches to improve food and nutrition information management in the country as well as objectives, methods and instruments, and operational considerations for a monitoring and evaluation system.

Policy Statement

on Food and Nutrition Security

by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Food and nutrition insecurity is a major concern in Afghanistan. Some 7.6 million people – 30% of the population – are food-insecure and almost 3.5 million people – 14% of the population – are borderline and thus vulnerable to food insecurity.¹ A result and manifestation of the severe state of food insecurity is widespread malnutrition, which is further compounded by a poor health, sanitation and caring environment. Over half of Afghan children under five years of age suffer from record rates of chronic malnutrition and it has been found that undernutrition depresses the gross domestic product (GDP) of Afghanistan by 2 to 3% per year.

The predominant causes of food and nutrition ~~and nutrition~~ insecurity in Afghanistan are limited production and availability of food supplies, insufficient access to food, food shortages arising from disasters and price shocks and poor diets, health, water and sanitation conditions which prevent proper food utilization. Undoubtedly, ensuring access to food by the large vulnerable, food and nutrition insecure segments of the population is an immediate, particularly daunting and pressing challenge that must be resolved.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) recognizes that hunger and malnutrition trigger political and social instability, and constrain the health, mental and physical capacities of its citizens to the detriment of national economic and social development. It is therefore committed to ensuring the fundamental right of the Afghan people to “physical, social and economic access to food, which is safe and consumed in sufficient quantity and quality to meet their dietary needs and food preferences, and is supported by an environment of adequate sanitation, health services and care, allowing for a healthy and active life”.²

The commitment of the Government to supporting and promoting food and nutrition security is underpinned by Articles 13 and 14 of the Afghanistan constitution and evidenced by the development of facilitating national policies, strategies and programs [i.e. Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), National Agricultural Development Framework (NADF), National Nutrition Policy and Strategy (NNPS), and National Priority Programs (NPPs)]. By endorsing pertinent international covenants and protocols (i.e. the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Millennium Development Goals and the Voluntary Guidelines for the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security), the Government has reaffirmed its obligation for food and nutrition security.

Heretofore, the actualization of this commitment has been constrained by the lack of a comprehensive strategic framework and integrated institutional arrangements for dealing with the multiple determinants of food and nutrition insecurity. The mandate for food and nutrition security remains dispersed across several agencies and the cluster system of the ANDS focuses only on

¹ WFP. NRVA 2011/12. Food Security Preliminary Results. July 2012. The preliminary results found a total population of 25,551,378.

² Committee on World Food Security Bureau, 2012

specific aspects of the problem. Consequently, the Government hereby adopts the Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSANA) as the overarching strategic approach to addressing the interrelated causes of food and nutrition insecurity in the country.

The **Goal** of AFSANA is to ensure that no Afghan suffers from hunger and every Afghan is well-nourished at all times. The strategic objectives and targets are as follows:

Objective 1: Assure the availability of sufficient food for all Afghans. **Target:** Increase food production by 20% within five years.³

Objective 2: Improve economic and physical access to food, especially by vulnerable and food insecure population groups. **Target:** Decrease, by 5% per annum through 2020, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.⁴

Objective 3: Ensure stable food supplies over time and in disaster situations. **Target:** Establishment of effective disaster preparedness and response mechanisms including a strategic grain reserve (SGR) with an initially targeted volume of 200,000 MT and strengthened resilience of the rural population against shocks.

Objective 4: Promote healthy diets, adequate food utilization and better nutrition particularly by women and children. **Target:** Reduce stunting in children aged 0-24 months by 5% by the end of 2016.⁵

AFSANA comprises: (i) an encompassing and workable definition of food and nutrition security; (ii) realistic and achievable goal, objectives and targets driven by an empirical situational analysis; (iii) explicit strategic fields of action; (iv) clear roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders and functional coordination structures; and (v) a robust monitoring and evaluation system. The coordination arrangements consist of a High Level Food and Nutrition Security Steering Committee (HLFNSSC) chaired by the 2nd Vice President of the Republic and supported by a Secretariat, subnational Provincial Food and Nutrition Security Committees (PFNSCs) led by Provincial Governors and complemented by District Development Assemblies (DDAs) and Community Development Councils (CDCs), and Focal Points (FPs) at core ministries or agencies with food security or nutrition responsibilities.

The Government calls on the people of Afghanistan and development partners to collaborate and coordinate their efforts for the effective implementation of the Afghanistan Food and Nutrition Security Agenda.

³ NPP2, component 1 "Food for Life" target.

⁴ Revised MDG 1 Target for Afghanistan, UNDP Afghanistan website, last update 21 July 2011.

⁵ Nutrition Action Framework, 1389 – 1393 (2012 -2016): A Multi-Sectoral Framework. April 2012.

1. INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan is a food and nutrition insecure country where large segments of the population suffer from hunger and malnutrition due to a host of structural constraints and policy challenges. The Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSANA), adopted by the Government in the foregoing Policy Statement, provides a comprehensive strategic framework for reversing the negative effects of food and nutrition insecurity on individuals, households and the nation.

The conceptual constructs of the AFSANA are aligned with the internationally accepted definition of food and nutrition security which is achieved when “...all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to food, which is safe and consumed in sufficient quantity and quality to meet their dietary needs and food preferences, and is supported by an environment of adequate sanitation, health services and care, allowing for a healthy and active life” (Committee on World Food Security Bureau, 2012).

This definition encompasses four dimensions or conditions for food and nutrition security (FNS) which are: **(i) availability**, the sufficiency of food supplies to cover the needs of the population; **(ii) access**, the ability to obtain food either through home production, markets or transfers; **(iii) stability**, of food supplies over time and in disaster situations, and **(iv) utilization**, the ability of individuals to consume a balanced diet of healthy, safe and nutritious food that match their needs and is fully absorbed by the body.⁶

Food and nutrition and nutrition insecurity, which occurs if any one or a combination of these conditions is temporarily or permanently unfulfilled, is prevalent in Afghanistan. Domestic food production, the major source of food supplies, is insufficient to satisfy consumption requirements, necessitating imports to fill the gap. In the poor and mostly rural households of the country, insufficient means to produce or purchase food often results in food insecurity and ultimately malnutrition. Malnutrition is further aggravated by unsatisfactory hygiene, diseases, unsafe drinking water, inadequate knowledge of nutrition, poor child care practices, absence of food quality standards and controls, and deficiencies in providing a balanced diet that widely prevent effective food utilization. Natural and man-made disasters, including market imbalances, price hikes and seasonal shortfalls in the annual production cycle, elicit unstable food supplies and acute food shortages.

In Chapter 2 of the framework which follows, an analysis of the food and nutrition security situation in Afghanistan is presented in the context of the four FNS dimensions. Availability is measured at the national level by comparing domestic food production, imports and total needs of the population; access at the household level from the perspectives of poverty, market constraints and socio-cultural impediments; utilization at the individual level; and stability relative to disasters, temporary food supply deficits and other shocks. The chapter also identifies groups that are most vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity. An expanded discussion of the main trends and features of food and nutrition security on which the contents of this chapter are based is found in the accompanying

⁶ This latter condition implies a widening of the concept of “Food Security” to “Food and Nutrition Security” as defined before.

“Analysis of the Food and Nutrition Security Situation in Afghanistan: Background Document to the Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSANA)”.

Chapter 3 presents the strategic framework for food and nutrition security in Afghanistan along with the goal, objectives, targets and principles that guided the formulation of the Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSANA). The chapter also discusses strategic fields of action required to improve the food and nutrition situation. The interventions were identified following a rigorous problem and objective analysis that considered priority problems, current programmes and projects in the food and nutrition domain, and lessons learned from these undertakings. Many of the measures have multiple effects and do contribute to other strategic FNS objectives.

Coherent institutional arrangements to ensure consistency, avoid duplication, fill gaps and create synergies during implementation of the AFSANA are the focus of Chapter 4. Roles and responsibilities of major stakeholders in the sector and at each level of governance are spelt out, as are the terms of reference, membership and other pertinent information, for national and subnational coordination structures that were designed based on accepted principles.

Various institutions generate food security and nutrition information in Afghanistan, from government entities to international agencies, NGOs and donor-funded projects. They provide socio-economic data, agricultural statistics, nutrition data, early warning information and emergency assessments. These information systems provide relevant and valuable data and information on the FNS situation in Afghanistan but do embody shortcomings that need to be tackled to obtain a consistent picture of the FNS situation, design and implement appropriate response strategies, and monitor progress and results of interventions. Chapter 5 sets out the features for an improved FNS information system in Afghanistan and a monitoring and evaluation system for the AFSANA.

2. FEATURES AND TRENDS OF THE FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION SITUATION

2.1 Country Context

Afghanistan is a least developed country with a per capita GDP of US\$ 629 (2010/11). Over a third of the population lives below the poverty line and more than half are at serious risk of falling into poverty.⁷ Three-quarters of Afghans are considered illiterate, maternal mortality rates are the second highest in the world, and life expectancy is only 48 years. With limited basic services, infrastructure and institutional capacities attributed in part to nearly 35 years of conflict that has displaced millions of people, Afghanistan ranks 172 on the 2011 Human Development Index (HDI) which measured the performance of 182 countries using composite life expectancy, education and income indicators.

Over 76% of the estimated population of 26 million live in rural areas and are predominantly reliant on agriculture for their livelihoods⁸. About 55% of households are engaged in farming and agriculture accounts for 31.4% of GDP. Agricultural products, led by dried fruits, nuts, carpets and rugs, account for 80% of total licit exports. The majority of farmers practice low productivity subsistence agriculture that is exposed to seasonal factors (i.e. rains and snow precipitation).

2.2 The Challenge of Food and Nutrition Insecurity

Based on preliminary results of the 2011/2012 NRVA that covered 322 out of 398 districts, 7.6 million people or 30% of the population are food-insecure (i.e. consume less than 2,100 kilo calories per person per day) of which 27% or 2.1 million people consume less than 1,500 kilo calories per person per day and are severely food insecure.. Five million Afghans, with over 20% comprising children under the age of five, consume inadequate amounts of both protein and calories. The food insecure population is mainly concentrated in the North-Eastern, Central and South-West provinces and a majority (5.6 million people) is rural-based.

Although the overall rate of food insecurity has decreased by 4%, from 31% in 2007/08 to 27% in 2011/12, due largely to improvements in rural areas from 32% to 26%, food insecurity remains unchanged at 31% in urban areas and its negative effects on nutrition, coupled with other aggravating factors, are a profound concern. Over one in every two children under five is chronically malnourished, and both women and children experience high prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies that leads to anemia and iodine deficiency disorders.

Entrenched food and nutrition and nutrition insecurity in Afghanistan is explained by several factors including limited availability, fragile accessibility, instability of food supplies, as well as poor diets, health, water and sanitation conditions which lead to inadequate utilization of food. The features and trends of these factors are discussed in the sections that follow, along with an identification of groups most at risk of food and nutrition insecurity.

⁷ Government estimates the population at nearly 27 million but other sources (i.e. World Bank) use a figure of 30 million.

⁸ According to the Central Statistics Organization, the settled population for 2010/2011 is 24.5 million people and the annual growth rate 2.05 percent; with the nomadic Kuchi it rises to 26 million. About 51 percent of the population is male and almost 50 percent (12 million people) is under 15 years of age, ranking this proportion among the highest in the world and indicating a high dependency ratio. Afghanistan has the highest fertility rate among South Asian countries (7.1) and 3.3 percent of the households are led by females as a consequence of protracted conflict.

2.2.1 Food Availability

Afghanistan is a cereal deficit country even in periods of good harvests. Agricultural production, particularly cereal output, is highly dependent on and sensitive to weather conditions. Accounting for 70% of total cereal consumption, wheat is both the major crop and staple. Wheat flour contributes 57 percent to the total caloric content of the average bundle of food items of the relatively poor.⁹ Other cereal crops with some significance are rice, maize and barley.

Wheat is grown on about 57% of the cultivated land (between 1.1 – 1.3 million ha); 45% of the wheat area in a normal year is irrigated while the remaining 55% depends entirely on rainfall. It is grown mainly in the North, North-East and West regions of the country and its productivity differs between irrigated and rain-fed areas; average wheat yield without fertilizers on irrigated land is 2.7 MT/ha (3.5 MT/ha with fertilizer) versus only 1.1 MT/ha on rain-fed land.¹⁰ Compared to the 1970s when about 3.3 million hectares were cultivated using various irrigation methods, only 1.8 million hectares are irrigated today. Of these, only 10% are irrigated using properly engineered systems and up to a third of irrigated land is not currently planted due to water constraints.¹¹ Notwithstanding a preponderance of improperly engineered systems, inappropriate technologies, poor management and water constraints, wheat on irrigated lands averages 73% of total production.

Afghanistan has not been self-sufficient in wheat production for many years due to recurrent droughts and the adverse impacts of the civil conflict on irrigation networks, rural infrastructure, marketing channels and livelihoods. The rate of self-sufficiency has varied from a low of 53% in 2004, when 2.3 million tons of wheat was produced, to a high of 96.6% in 2009 and an output of 5.1 million tons. With domestic production satisfying only two-thirds of national requirements in an environment characterized by a widening food gap attributed to urbanization and population- and income-driven demand growth, relatively low yields in rain-fed wheat production and susceptibility to droughts have entailed supply shortages and instabilities. For example, in the drought year of 2011, the yields of rain-fed wheat sank to 0.30 tons/ha, and rain-fed wheat production declined from 1.45 million tons in 2010 to 321,000 tons. .

The recurrent shortfall between domestic cereals demand and production has been covered by imports which averaged 1.5 million tons a year between 2002 and 2011 and accounted for 24% of cereal supplies over the ten year period. Cereal imports are sourced from commercial suppliers and they mainly consist of wheat and wheat flour with limited quantities of rice (about 70,000 metric tons). The bulk of imports (about 80%) originate from Pakistan, with Kazakhstan and Iran being the other significant suppliers. Annual cereal food aid deliveries range between 150,000 and 300,000 tons, and are predominantly channeled through the World Food Programme (WFP). Dependence on imports has exposed the country to regional and world market situations and trends which can be highly volatile, as experience since 2007 has shown.

Although the demand-production gap is covered by food imports, Afghanistan still experiences a “nutrition gap” (i.e. the difference between total available food for consumption, which is food grain production plus imports minus non-food uses, and the amount of food needed in the country to

⁹The World Bank. Rising Food Prices and Coping Strategies: Household-level Evidence from Afghanistan. Anna D’Souza and Dean Jolliffe. The World Bank South Asia Region, Economic Policy and Poverty Team. November 2010.

¹⁰ World Bank (source WFP VAM)

¹¹ ANDS, p.9.

support a 2,100 per capita calorie intake for the total population¹²). This gap was estimated at 2 million tons in 2008 and 144, 000 tons in 2012.¹³

2.2.2 Insufficient Access to Food

Poverty and dilapidated marketing infrastructure are major impediments to the accessing of food by Afghans at the household level. Poverty and household food insecurity are closely linked. Although 36% of the population (i.e. almost 10 million) lives below the poverty line and 30 percent are food insecure, about 70 percent of the poor suffer from food insecurity.¹⁴ Furthermore, the percentage of poor households suffering from different aspects and dimensions of food insecurity (i.e. calorie deficiency, protein deficiency, poor dietary diversity) far exceeds that of the non-poor and the national average.

According to the preliminary results of the 2011/2012 NRVA, the largest proportion of the food-insecure resides in the Northeast provinces of Badakshan, Takhar, Baghlan and Kunduz; the Central provinces of Kabul, Kapisa, Parwan, Panjsher, Logar and Wardak; and the Southwest provinces of Kandahar, Hilmand, Nimroz, Zabul and Uruzgan. Severe to very severe food insecurity exists in the Central Highlands provinces of Bamyan, Daykundi, Ghor and Ghazni.

The close linkage between poverty and food insecurity is evidenced by the geographic distribution of poverty rates (percent of population below the poverty line) and a congruent pattern of calorie deficiency (indicator of household food insecurity). In general, provinces with high incidence of poverty also have a high rate of calorie deficiency, with some notable exceptions, particularly in the West Central region where there is a high incidence of poverty (43 to 44%) but a relatively low calorie deficiency rate (19 to 20%). This phenomenon is explained by different livelihood systems and coping strategies of poor households that rely more on relatively cheaper sources of calorie supply such as grain, albeit at the cost of a more balanced and diversified diet. This is evidenced by data on protein deficiency and poor dietary diversity, two other indicators for household food insecurity.

Markets in Afghanistan are relatively developed, integrated and competitive despite trade being hindered by limitations in road networks, storage facilities, security, access to credit and transportation capacity. The Preliminary 2011/2012 NRVA Food Security Report found that market purchases are the main source of wheat flour for 65% of rural households and 91% of urban residents, demonstrating that a majority of the population relies on markets to access their staple food.

However, markets are not accessible to all. While 80% of urban residents can access a market within one hour by foot or animal, only 26% of the rural population can do so. Over 30% of the rural population requires a means of transport to reach a market and for a third of rural households, public transportation to the market is not available¹⁵. Furthermore, with temperatures in the country varying dramatically from hot summers to frigid winters and climate in the highlands a function of elevation, roads in mountainous areas are frequently blocked throughout the winter because of heavy snow accumulation. Under such circumstances, food pre-positioning from the Government's limited strategic reserves and by international agencies such as the World Food Programme is often required to stave off hunger and malnutrition.

¹² USDA Economic Research Service, Food Security Assessment, 2008-09, June 2009.

¹³ USDA Economic Research Service, Food Security Assessment 2012-22, July 2012

¹⁴ Referring to the MoEC-WB 2012 analysis, which is based on the NRVA 2007/08 data.

¹⁵ NRVA 2011/2

Small local markets are likely to exist, but food availability is often limited due in part to the subsistence nature of production and the tendency for extra-market exchanges (i.e. sharecropping, land rent and other obligations such as religious taxes). Food prices are predominantly dependent on regional markets and the trade policies of neighboring Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

2.2.3 Poor Food Utilization, Health and Nutrition

Despite recent improvements in food security and health indicators, high rates of undernutrition persist in Afghanistan, particularly among children and women of child bearing age.¹⁶ Fifty-five percent of children under the age of 5 are stunted, 18% are wasted and 39% are underweight.¹⁷ Twenty-one percent of women are underweight, with a Body Mass Index of less than 18.5, and a range of macro and micronutrient deficiencies contributes to anemia and other diseases in the country.¹⁸ It is estimated that 48% of non-pregnant women are iron deficient and 25% suffer from anemia, with 72% of children 6- 59 months iron deficient and nearly 38% anemic.¹⁹ Iodine deficiency among women of reproductive age is 75% and among primary school age children, 72%. The highest incidence of iron deficiency disorders is found in the mountainous provinces of the north and central highlands.²⁰ Deficiencies of Vitamins A and C, the latter manifested in occasional scurvy epidemics in highly food insecure areas with poor dietary diversity, are also of concern as is night blindness among pregnant women.²¹

The prevalence of iodine deficiency has likely decreased in recent years with improved access and use of iodized salt (from 1 percent of households in 2002 to 53 percent in 2007/08²² and to 61 percent in 2011²³). Furthermore, child deficiencies may have taken a downturn in recent times given the high coverage of semi-annual vitamin A supplements.²⁴

Afghanistan's malnutrition challenges have multiple causes, paramount among which are limited dietary diversity, widespread food insecurity and poverty, which have been discussed in earlier sections of this chapter, as well infectious diseases, limited access to health services, inadequate caring practices, gender inequity, and weak food quality control.²⁵ Cereals and tubers, oil and fats, and sugar products provide 80% of calories and Afghans consume these food items almost every day of the week.²⁶ Urban households tend to have relatively more diets that include meat and fish, pulses and lentils, dairy products, fruits and vegetables consumption compared to rural areas.

Many Afghans suffer from infectious diseases. For example, the rates for acute respiratory infections, diarrhea and measles were found to be 25%, 19% and 6%, respectively.²⁷ The 2006 Afghanistan Health Survey also found that 47% of children less than five years of age had suffered from diarrhea

¹⁶ Ministry of Public Health. National Nutrition Survey. 2004 and BPHS Review

¹⁷ Levitt E., Kostermans K, Laviolette L, and Nkosinathi M. (2011) Malnutrition in Afghanistan: Scale, scope, causes, and potential response. The World Bank, Washington DC.

¹⁸ MoPH National Nutrition Survey, 2004

¹⁹ Anemia in pregnancy increases significantly the risks of dying during child birth. Iron deficiency in early childhood can cause the loss of up to 25 IQ points.

²⁰ Iodine deficiency during pregnancy impairs brain development of the fetus, leading to a loss of an average of 13 IQ points.

²¹ Nutrition Action Framework (Afghanistan). 2012.

²² The National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, 2007/08

²³ Micronutrient Initiative, 2011.

²⁴ Nutrition Action Framework (Afghanistan). 2012.

²⁵ Nutrition Action Framework (Afghanistan)

²⁶ Preliminary Food Security Report of the 2011/2012 NRVA.

²⁷ Nutrition Action Framework (Afghanistan). 2012.

in the previous month, with prevalence greatest during the summer.²⁸ Poor hygiene and sanitation as well as limited potable water supply contribute greatly to these illnesses. Only 48% of the population uses improved drinking water sources (39% in rural areas), 37% improved sanitation services (30% in rural areas),²⁹ and hand washing with soap is relatively rare in rural areas.

Although access to health services³⁰ has seen marked improvements in recent years, from 9% of households in 2000 to 65% in 2006³¹, inadequate access and substandard care are serious problems. Qualitative field studies have found that exclusive breast feeding for six months is only 57% complementary feeding (implemented after six months of exclusive breastfeeding) is introduced too early or late with foods of inadequate nutrient density, continued feeding during bouts of infection is rare, and increased food consumption during pregnancy is unusual while “eating down” during pregnancy is common.

Several aspects of food safety inadequacies and gender inequity also contribute to malnutrition in Afghanistan through their direct impacts on food security. Food quality control systems for locally processed and imported foods are weak due to the absence of recognized standards, legislation, regular inspection systems, and border controls, imperiling food security. Gender inequity is manifested in inadequate access to services, control over resources and unfortunately, economic opportunities in the health, education and agricultural sectors; the adverse effects of such inequities on malnutrition are evidenced via inter- and intra-household food distribution.

2.2.4 Stability of Food Supplies

Household food and nutrition insecurity is also compounded by temporary shortages arising from seasonal factors, natural disasters, conflicts and market and price shocks. The 2011/2012 NRVA found unusual food prices reported by 54% of households to be the most pronounced shock with severe weather (22%), flooding (17%), late damaging frost (16%), heavy rains that prevent work (15%), and insecurity and violence (15%) as impediments to consumption and production.

The impact of the cropping calendar is most felt during the “hungry season” in spring and summer, when household food stocks from the previous harvest tend to dwindle with expectations of the new harvest. Seasonal shortages also occur in mountainous regions during winter when, due to snow cover, these areas are totally cut-off from the rest of the country. The severity of winter is a problem reported in 76 districts of 19 provinces particularly Ghor, Daykundi, Bamyan, Badakshan, Ghazni and Wardak which are located in high altitudes with only one crop harvest per year, limited arable land, poor infrastructure and no stable access to markets.³²

Recurrent natural disasters are also adverse to food and nutrition security. Over the last decade, an average of 400,000 people have been affected each year by some kind of natural disaster and in 2012 alone, more than 3.6 million people were affected by this lingering phenomenon and conflict

²⁸ Afghanistan Health Survey, 2006. In the preliminary food security analysis by WFP of the 2011/2012 NRVA, around 44% of women reported children having cough with fever, 30% fever and diarrhea, 34% cough and 17% cough with unusual fast breathing. The percentage of children with these diseases was higher in rural areas relative to urban settings.

²⁹ UNICEF. State of the World's Children, 2010. New York. MRRD figures for safe water access and sanitation in rural areas are 27% and 5% respectively. The preliminary 2011/2012 NRVA analysis by WFP determined that 46% (74% in urban areas and 37% in rural areas) or an estimated 1.6 million households have access to improved water source. Furthermore, at least 30% of urban households have access to improved sanitation facilities compared to only 2 percent in rural area for a national average of 9%.

³⁰ Reachable within one hour.

³¹ ANDS, 2008.

³² WFP. Preliminary 2011/2012 NRVA. August 2012.

(UN OCHA estimate). Droughts cause harvest failures, as was confirmed by the Emergency Food Security Assessments (EFSA) of mid 2011 which found that 2.86 million people had become food insecure in the northern, northeastern and western regions.³³

Food price hikes also threaten household food and nutrition, as in 2007-2008 when prices of domestic wheat and wheat flour rose by over 100% and the urban food consumer price index (CPI) increased nearly 60% compared to a 10 percent rise in non-food CPI between fall 2007 and summer 2008.³⁴ This phenomenon not only shocked the already poor and food insecure households in the country, but also pushed many living at the borderline of poverty and food insecurity below minimum levels of subsistence. Because of the lack of dietary diversity, many households including the poor were forced to engage in negative quality-quantity tradeoffs or coping strategies comprising changing the composition of their diet from meat, fruits and vegetables toward lower quality, cheaper foods like wheat in order to maintain caloric intake.³⁵

2.2.5 Vulnerable Groups

The rural poor, women and children, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees, destitute urban dwellers, and a number of other extremely poor and vulnerable households are most at risk of food and nutrition insecurity. They are likely to suffer from acute and chronic food insecurity, and lacking assets and sources for survival, do resort to formal or informal social safety net support. They comprise a significant proportion of the Afghan population and their need for access to food is perhaps the most challenging and daunting imperative in the FNS sphere.

Rural poor: Poverty and household food insecurity are particularly severe in rural areas where a majority of the population lives. The rural poor and food insecure population includes small subsistence farmers with little or no access to land, small herders (Kuchi) and casual laborers.

Women and children: According to the preliminary analysis of the 2011/2012 NRVA, at least 40% of households headed by females are food insecure compared to only 27% of those headed by men. They and their children are most at risk of undernutrition and, in the absence of a male, such households tend to experience lack of income, security, and social protection. A major contributing factor to the susceptibility of women to food and nutrition insecurity is socio-cultural barriers to educational advancement. Their literacy rate is lower (23% versus 47% for men), as are the net primary and secondary attendance rates of girls (42% versus 60% for men and 24% versus 34% for men, respectively).³⁶

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees: During last two and a half decades, 8 million Afghans have been refugees and/or internally displaced due to security threats, ethnic conflicts, political conflict, economic problems and natural disasters. Since 2002, about 5.7 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan and Iran. In addition to the returning refugees is an estimated 480,000 IDPs.³⁷ Many returnees often find their homes destroyed or occupied and land

³³ UN Consolidated Appeal, 2012

³⁴The World Bank. Rising Food Prices and Coping Strategies: Household-level Evidence from Afghanistan. Anna D'Souza and Dean Jolliffe. The World Bank South Asia Region, Economic Policy and Poverty Team. November 2010.

³⁵Ibid...the study also found that a one percent increase in the price of domestic wheat flour is associated with a 0.20 percent decline in real monthly per capita food consumption; resulting decline in food consumption would increase poverty rate from 36 to 48 percent.

³⁶ Preliminary 2011/2012 NRVA.

³⁷ UNHCR, December 2011.

unworkable or squatted on, preventing the transition to normalcy and promoting exposure to food and nutrition insecurity.

Poor urban dwellers: Unable to re-establish their lives in rural areas, many IDPs and returnees move to urban areas where they have to cope with uncertain and expensive housing, high food prices and lack of employment. More often than not, many end up falling into the class of poor and food insecure urban dwellers. An estimated 30,000 of these poor urban dwellers live in informal settlements in Kabul province alone.

Other vulnerable households: Larger households with more than 10 persons and those whose main income source is opium production, borrowers and wage laborers, Zakat, seasonal migrants as well as those with disabled and/or sick members unable to work and in need of medical care are also at risk of being vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity.

3. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

3.1 Architecture of the Framework

Food and nutrition security is a multidimensional phenomenon that concerns individuals, households, communities and the nation. Its achievement requires establishing linkages between stakeholders from various sectors such as agriculture, health, education and infrastructure, and addressing cross-cutting concerns like gender mainstreaming and climate change and environmental sustainability. Appropriate FNS policy and strategy design therefore necessitates use of a ‘food and nutrition security lens’ that considers all factors, institutions and organizations, and policies, strategies and programmes that are pertinent to making food available, ensuring access to food, stabilizing food supply and enhancing diets and food utilization.

Consequently, the policy and strategic approach of the Afghanistan Food and Nutrition Security Agenda: (i) provides a direction for achieving international and national food and nutrition security goals and objectives; (ii) addresses gaps in current policies, strategies and programmes; (iii) establishes effective coordination structures and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress and facilitate adjustment; (iv) assigns stakeholder responsibilities based on comparative advantage and organizational mandate and ensures that these roles as well as strategic actions are specific but also flexible to allow elaboration at the onset of implementation; (v) mainstreams gender considerations both in the measures to be undertaken and in the monitoring and evaluation system that will foster a better understanding of the relationship between food and nutrition insecurity and gender; and (vi) considers the importance of climate change adaptation and environmental sustainability for food and nutrition security.

Annex 1 depicts the major elements and features of the Afghanistan Food and Nutrition Security Agenda. It exhibits: (i) the FNS objectives of improved access to food, sufficient availability of food, ensured stability of food supplies and improved diets and utilization and their impacts on national development goals; (ii) the strategic fields of action and their contribution to these four objectives; and (iii) key development programmes that are underway or in preparation, are addressing the relevant fields of action, and are contributing to the respective specific strategic objectives. The framework also links and integrates measures aimed at improving food and nutrition security with the specific nutritional objectives and interventions stipulated under the Nutrition Action Framework (NAF).

3.1.1 Goal, Objectives and Targets

The goal of the Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSANA) is to ensure that no Afghan suffers from hunger and every Afghan is well-nourished at all times. The strategic objectives and related targets of AFSANA are as follows:

Objective 1: Assure the availability of sufficient food for all Afghans. **Target:** Increase food production by 20% within five years.³⁸

Objective 2: Improve economic and physical access to food especially by vulnerable and food insecure population groups. **Target:** Decrease, by 5% per annum through 2020, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.³⁹

³⁸ NPP2, component 1 “Food for Life” target.

Objective 3: Ensure stable food supplies over time and in disaster situations. **Target:** Establishment of effective disaster preparedness and response mechanisms including a strategic grain reserve (SGR) with an initially targeted volume of 200,000 MT and strengthened resilience of the rural population against shocks.

Objective 4: Promote healthy diets and expanded access to improved water, sanitation and health services to ensure adequate food utilization and enhanced nutrition particularly of women and children. **Target:** Reduce stunting in children aged 0-24 months by 5% by the end of 2016.⁴⁰

3.1.2 Guiding Principles

The Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda is undergirded by the following core principles:

1. FNS is multidimensional and cross-sectoral, involving multiple stakeholders at all levels of governance;
2. Current policies, programmes and institutional structures relevant for food security and nutrition are to be considered and lessons learned are to be leveraged in designing new ones;
3. Strategic actions for reversing food and nutrition insecurity must be flexible to enable elaboration at the onset of implementation;
4. Roles assigned to key stakeholders should reflect their institutional mandates and evolving comparative advantage; and
5. Mainstreaming gender ensures fair consideration of the specific needs of both men and women during the prioritization of strategic actions and their equitable participation in M & E activities.

3.2 Strategic Fields of Action to Improve Food and Nutrition Security

The fields of actions are organized according to their primary strategic objective (i.e. increasing availability, improving access to food, ensuring stability of food supplies, and improving healthy diets and food utilization). However, it is important to note that most of the specific measures that have been placed in each of these categories have multiple effects and do also contribute to other strategic FNS objectives as shown in the following graph:⁴¹

Multiple effects particularly apply to measures of agricultural development. Even though primarily aimed at increasing food production, hence availability, they have at the same time, positive effects on the other aspects of food security and nutrition, i.e. access, stability and utilization. Through improved productivity and increased production, farmers get better access to food, since more produce is available at farm household level that can be either consumed or sold. Increased and diversified food production will, furthermore, also increase the farm households' resilience to disasters (an aspect of stability) as well as enable them to maintain a more diversified and balanced diet over the year (an aspect of utilization and nutrition). Such multiple effects on different aspects of food and nutrition security are particularly important since they benefit rural households that constitute the majority of the vulnerable and food insecure population groups in Afghanistan.

³⁹ Revised MDG 1 Target for Afghanistan, UNDP Afghanistan website, last update 21 July 2011.

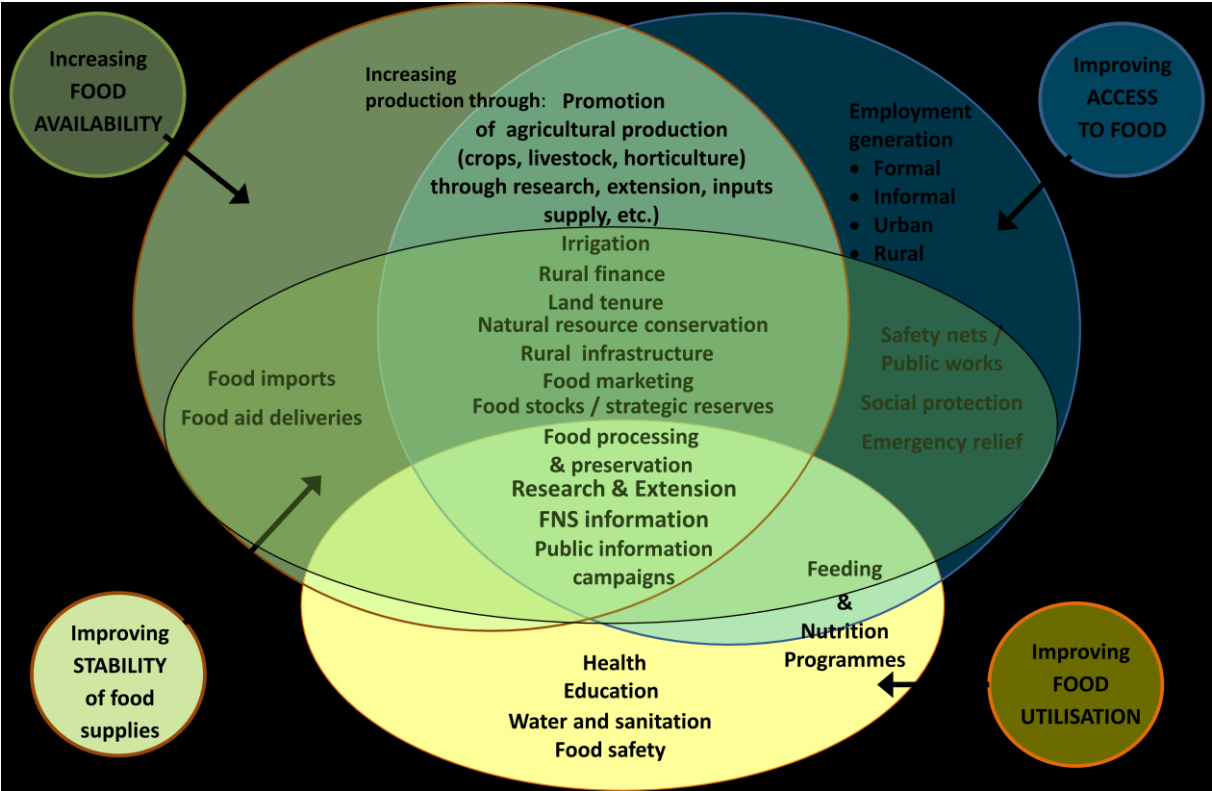
⁴⁰ Nutrition Action Framework, 1389 – 1393 (2012 -2016), A Multi-Sectoral Framework of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development, draft, April 2012

⁴¹ Fields of action placed in more than one circle indicate multiple effects on different aspects of food and nutrition security.

Another example of multiple effects are improvements in rural infrastructure, which facilitate agriculture and food production, provide better access to markets for producers as well as consumers, generate employment and income during the construction phase (improved economic access), and also ensure better communication and relief logistics in the case of disasters (aspect of stability).

Ultimately, the interventions in all strategic fields of action will contribute to improvement in the nutritional status of the population.

Graph: Strategic Fields of Action for Improving Food and Nutrition Security
Impacts on Availability, Access, Stability, and Utilisation & Nutrition



3.2.1 Increasing food availability

A combination of domestic food production promotion and the creation of an enabling environment for food imports will be needed to assure that sufficient food is available at all times for all Afghans.

Promoting domestic food production

The agricultural sector is the major source of food supply in the country. Sufficient availability of food depends, therefore, on stable and further substantial increases in food production through expansion of cultivated land and productivity increases. Fostering agricultural production and productivity increases is the objective of the “Food for Live” Programme⁴² which is being prepared by the Agricultural and Rural Development Cluster (ARD). A wide range of measures to promote agriculture are planned under the programme for different subsectors (i.e. wheat and other crops,

⁴² Component 1 of the “National Comprehensive Agriculture Production and Market Development” NPP, currently still in draft stage but expected to be implemented from 2013 onwards.

livestock, horticulture) and these are expected to bring about substantial increases in food production, hence contributing to the strategic objective of sufficient food availability.

Among these planned measures is irrigation which plays a key role in increasing food production and productivity and is, therefore, a priority measure for increasing and stabilizing food supplies. Strategic actions to increase and improve irrigated agriculture, as defined in the National Water and Natural Resource Development Programme (ARD NPP 1) include the expansion of irrigation systems, rehabilitation of existing irrigation systems, establishment of water storage facilities, introduction of improved and adapted irrigation technologies (e.g. supplementary irrigation), and improved water and irrigation management.

Other strategic approaches that have to be applied in designing, planning and implementing agricultural development interventions are:

- promotion of appropriate land use practices in irrigated and dry-land farming (e.g. watershed management);
- building capacities in planning, management, technical fields and monitoring and evaluation at national, provincial and field levels;
- developing and promoting improved production technology packages, based on farming systems research, which take the specific needs, constraints, capacities, resources, livelihood conditions, and coping mechanisms of farmers and their households into consideration and local environmental conditions into account;
- increasing the diversity of food production to enhance households' resilience to disasters and enable them to maintain a more diversified and balanced diet; and
- accompanying food production expansion interventions with improvements in agricultural and rural service delivery in relevant fields (i.e. extension, credit, input supply, pest and disease control), advocating a close, two-way interaction between research and extension to improve farmer advisory services and supporting adequate number and requisite capacity building of support staff.

Additional areas of emphasis are:

- pursuing an approach that combines government agency leadership and community participation to determine whether innovations and other forms of support match farmers' interests, needs and capacities, and devising options to adjust promotion packages whenever necessary;
- Undertaking regulatory measures to enhance security of land rights in cases where targeted farmers have no secure land tenure rights (crop and/or range land), and
- promoting farmers' organizations (self-help groups, common interest cooperatives, special women farmers associations) in order to link farmers to markets and strengthen their bargaining powers.

Rural infrastructural development and improvement in the functioning of agricultural marketing systems are also necessary. Better rural infrastructure such as access roads, water supply systems, communication facilities and energy sources will boost food production and supplies and generate employment and income. Market transparency will need to be increased through up-to-date

agricultural market information and new market channels and outlets opened to ensure that farmers can sell their surpluses at market-conforming and remunerable prices.

A prerequisite for the effective implementation of these measures is **substantial increase of public investments in agricultural and rural development and increased allocation of budgetary resources by government and donors**. Ensuring the efficient use of these resources and effectiveness in designing and implementing the interventions that will be funded requires the application of lessons learned from previous and ongoing agricultural development programs and projects. These lessons, including use of participatory approaches tailoring and targeting of interventions, localization, improved service delivery and capacity building, and need for better marketing infrastructure are interwoven in the approaches to increasing food production.

Ensuring stable food imports

Afghanistan will continue to depend on food imports to ensure that sufficient food is available to cover increasing demand in the foreseeable future and to cater for production shortfalls caused by recurring disasters. This implies continued exposure to international, particularly regional food markets, and the trade policies of exporting countries. Some internal barriers to greater market efficiency (i.e. high transport costs, minimal transparency in transactions, and low value addition capacity for cereals) also contribute to price volatility in times of shortages and the ‘repatriation’ of some domestically-produced food.

To mitigate the negative consequences on food ~~and nutrition~~ security of potential export trade restrictions and to improve functioning food markets, the Government will:

- Negotiate trade arrangements with major suppliers that guarantee minimum levels of food supplies at prevailing market prices or preferential rates;
- Explore possibilities for maintaining a grain contingency and entering into futures contracts to minimize supply and price risks;
- Invest in marketing infrastructure such as roads with regional trade implications as well as processing and storage facilities needed to add value to wheat and other cereals; and
- Improve regulatory frameworks that impact on market structure, conduct and performance with emphasis on actions that promote greater transparency and accountability in transactions.

3.2.2 Improving access to food

Inclusive economic growth in agriculture and other sectors that result in increased employment and income opportunities reduces poverty and enhances access to food at the household level. While sustainable, this approach takes time and dependence on it does not resolve the plight of highly vulnerable food insecure population groups (i.e. female-headed households with young children, elderly, disabled, orphans) with little or no opportunity to benefit from economic growth. Complementary and specifically targeted interventions such as public transfer schemes are also required to ensure a minimum level of subsistence for these Afghans whose needs are often immediate and urgent.

The Government is cognizant of the need for social assistance, and has established a number of programs to address the needs of rural communities and vulnerable segments of the population. The “National Rural Access Program” (NRAP) of the MRRD and the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) provides targeted social protection for vulnerable groups through the rebuilding of rural access infrastructure (i.e. secondary and tertiary roads), using a labor based approach, and strengthening of institutions. The MRRD-led, multi-donor funded “Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Program” (AREDP) seeks to increase employment, income of rural men and women, and the sustainability of targeted local enterprises by addressing credit and capital needs. And the “National Solidarity Programme” (NSP) of MRRD empowers rural communities to make decisions affecting their own lives and livelihoods by enhancing their capacities to identify, plan, manage and monitor their own development projects. These MRRD-executed programmes are complemented by MoLSAMD’s “Pilot Safety Net Mechanism” project which the Ministry plans to scale up into a “Conditional Cash Transfer System” that will provide incentives to the most vulnerable participants in skills development and literacy initiatives during implementation of the “Sustainable Decent Work Through Skills Development and Employment Policies for Job-Rich Growth National Priority Program”.

This section describes four categories of interventions for improving access to food (i.e. employment and income generation, public works programmes, social safety nets and consumer subsidies), their delivery modalities, and the policy orientations warranted for their effective and efficient implementation.

Creating employment and income opportunities

Undoubtedly, creating jobs and enabling other income-generating avenues is the most important and sustainable approach to improving access to food for all Afghans. However, with donor assistance likely to decrease in the coming years as foreign troops withdraw and the global economy remains sluggish, Afghanistan will have to implement measures that create jobs and generate revenue needed to overcome unemployment and underemployment in a country where almost fifty percent of the labor force lacks decent remunerative work.

The policy responses and strategic actions that must be taken by the Government to generate employment and increase incomes in a bid to reduce food and nutrition insecurity are as follows:

- Revitalize efforts, in concert with partners, to hasten improvements in a business environment generally “characterized by a weak regulatory and legal regime, institutional and structural deficiencies, poor infrastructure and corruption”;⁴³
- Fully implement the Integrated Trade and SME Support National Priority Program (NPP) of the Private Sector Development Cluster; ;
- Ensure achievement of crucial private sector impacting deliverables contained in most of the other 21 NPPs;
- Improve human capital by implementing appropriate NPPs in the Human Resource Development (HRD) cluster and others that are complementary;
- Strengthen the national security infrastructure and improve the handling of security incidents to bolster confidence;

⁴³ Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Private Sector: The Engine for Growth, Jobs and Delivery. Annex III for Towards Self-Reliance: Strategic Vision for the Transformation Decade. 12 June 2012 (2.2 Draft).

- Provide an enabling environment devoid of political-legal issues (i.e. corruption and lack of transparency) and consistent with the rule of law; and
- Promote infrastructural, industrial and agricultural development.

Providing productive safety nets through public works

Two kinds of productive safety nets that are appropriate for Afghan circumstances are public employment, through cash-for-work and food-for-work schemes, and vouchers.⁴⁴ **Food for Work (FFW) and Cash for Work (CFW)** modalities meet immediate and longer term needs of the poor and vulnerable by providing immediate payment in the form of food, cash or vouchers and creating productive assets or public goods.⁴⁵ To facilitate their contribution to food and nutrition security, the Government will ensure that:

- CFW and FFW schemes are undertaken only in those circumstances where tests of appropriateness have been conducted and effectiveness and efficiency conditions satisfied;
- Facilitate the participation of all social groups, particularly women and the disabled, in these activities through skills development and other measures;
- Improve the coordination of programs in collaboration with the international community which funds and/or implements a majority of these types of interventions; and
- Strengthen the capacities of local implementing partners and sector agencies.

Vouchers blend food and cash transfers; they are distributed to eligible groups and can be cashed to purchase a predetermined set of commodities in specific shops.⁴⁶ Implementing partners can be ordinary private shops or retail outlets that are refunded by government or the donor upon presentation of coupons by beneficiaries. The government or donor is not directly involved in supply and retailing operations and its involvement is confined to administrative tasks such as the issuance and distribution of the vouchers and refunding of participating retailers.

The schemes can be designed so that beneficiaries are given a choice among a range of scheduled commodities, rendering vouchers as "near-money". Voucher schemes are consistent with market operations and are a cost-effective way of food-mediated income transfer to low income households,

⁴⁴ Food-for-work modalities are sometimes referred to as Food-for-Assets in a recovery context. The preliminary analysis of the 2011/2012 NRVA found 10% of households indicating participation in cash-for-work, food-for-work, or income generating programmes or projects in the past year. The largest proportion of households who participated in these activities were in Badakhshan (60%), Daykundi (47%), Ghor (31%), Bamyan (25%) and Farah (20%).

⁴⁵ FFW is appropriate only where targeted households lack access to food, food is unavailable or transferring cash would not stimulate market supplies (inelastic supply), and prospective beneficiaries have labour potential that is not currently used or is poorly paid. On the other hand, CFW may be utilized when targeted households have surplus labour, food is generally available on local markets for those with purchasing power and is not unusually expensive, and the risk of inflationary pressure is low. Both FFW and CFW can be self-targeting by setting wage rates that will only attract those with no better alternatives, and both have their specific advantages and disadvantages. CFW(i) treats people affected by crisis as active agents in their own lives, by giving them choices; (ii) is generally less costly; (iii) are generally taken more seriously and executed with higher commitment; and (iv) can stimulate the local economy, including agriculture, if part of cash income is used to buy local products and services whereas FFW participants often have to resell – usually at a depressed price – part of the food rations received in order to generate some cash for other urgent expenses. Potential disadvantages of CFW include security risks and risks of fraud in cash handling, the possibility of misuse of funds, and the loss of real value in the case of inflation.

⁴⁶ Like cash, vouchers are an appropriate response to emergencies when: (i) targeted households lack access to food; (ii) food is generally available for those with purchasing power; and (iii) the risk of inflationary pressure in food markets is low. The key difference between vouchers and cash is that there is a greater degree of security against fraud or misuse. However, vouchers are less flexible than cash, to the extent that they may be sold by the beneficiaries if some important non-food needs are not addressed. The key concern regarding utilization of cash and vouchers in emergency situations to assist vulnerable groups hinges on their sustainability and efficacy over the longer term.

largely in line with the objectives of budgetary savings and market liberalization.⁴⁷ Given the possible advantages of voucher systems and their potential suitability for assisting vulnerable population groups in emergency and longer-term contexts, the GoIRA will:

- Commission research to identify best practices from other countries as well as draw on experiences from pilot schemes currently underway to identify appropriate modalities for scaling up current pilots;
- Based on findings, consider implementing cash transfer modalities in tandem with food assistance programmes in selected areas;
- Redouble efforts to increase the use of vouchers in appropriate circumstances (i.e. emergency and longer term contexts) in consultation with key donors and other stakeholders; and
- Where it is clear that vouchers are more appropriate than direct food assistance, strive to allocate the necessary resources and secure additional support from development partners within the parameters of the ANDS and the Social Protection Strategy and Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD).

Delivering social safety nets

Many Afghans without productive capacities are vulnerable to food ~~and nutrition~~ insecurity in the absence of cash and/or in kind transfers. Some are unable to work while those willing and able to work often find themselves unemployed. These individuals and the households in which they reside depend on food or cash transfers to gain access to the food they need. Free food distribution and cash transfers are suitable, under the circumstances, as effective safety net delivery mechanisms.

Free distribution of food is appropriate during emergencies when targeted households lack access to food, food is unavailable on the market, and alternative ways of helping people access food take too long (as in the case of abrupt, rapid onset disasters) or are not practical or reliable. The Government will thus take the following actions to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of free food distribution:

- Improve vulnerability assessment, particularly targeting criteria and capacity, to enable appropriate identification of vulnerable people;
- Ensure that current coordination mechanisms for emergency responses such as the National Disaster Management Commission (NDMC) complement institutional arrangements for the AFSANA;
- Intensify efforts, in partnership with the international community, to strengthen the capacity of local implementing partners (IPs);
- Work with development partners to improve the availability and accuracy of operational data (i.e. financial), through the establishment of clearer accounting procedures for humanitarian emergency operations, for better accountability and transparency as well as monitoring and evaluation; and
- Collaborate with development partners to improve vulnerability assessment methods and exit strategies by developing guidelines for differentiating between mitigation and recovery activities based regional and international best practices.

⁴⁷ Thomson, A. & M. Metz, Implications of Economic Policies for Food Security, FAO 1996

Cash transfers can be an appropriate, effective and efficient emergency response.⁴⁸ However, cash injections must be carefully designed and managed, a condition that is complicated in Afghanistan by the absence of empirical evidence for proper targeting. Against this background, the Government will:

- Assess the effectiveness of ongoing pilot schemes and apply relevant lessons during the design and implementation of the MoLSAMD planned cash transfer project;
- Fund, in collaboration with donors, the planned MoLSAMD cash transfer scheme; and
- Strengthen the capacity of MoLSAMD to implement the cash transfer project and coordinate all similar schemes undertaken by development partners.

Consumer subsidies

Consumer subsidies are a frequent instrument for ensuring supplies of basic food commodities at affordable prices to consumers. They can be general or targeted, with pros and cons for both systems.⁴⁹ Targeted subsidies are frequently considered in the case of food price shocks, to cushion their devastating effects on poor households. Different approaches can be applied for targeted subsidies such as a voucher system (used in the USA) or distribution through special outlets or shops (as in India). They also can be restricted to inferior goods which are only consumed by the poor (as in Egypt where brown bread is subsidized), or geographically targeted (i.e. to areas where the most vulnerable live such as Afghanistan's mountainous provinces). Therefore, the Government will:

- Undertake a study of the effectiveness and efficiency of the electricity subsidy available to residents of Kabul so that lessons learned can be applied to new consumer subsidy interventions; and
- Conduct research on the feasibility of targeted consumer subsidies for staple food grains and if the results are positive, consider implementing same in times of need.

The social safety net delivery mechanisms discussed in this policy and strategic framework (i.e. free food distribution, cash transfers) will not be effective unless the Government improves the coordination of social protection interventions, allocates additional budgetary resources to the sector, particularly social safety nets, and generates and utilizes better information to improve targeting as well as the monitoring and evaluation of transfer programs.⁵⁰ It is understood that to address entrenched poverty, exclusion and the many forms of vulnerability existing in Afghanistan, multiple but complementary macroeconomic and sector-specific approaches are needed. Interventions to smoothen consumption and protect livelihoods must be undertaken as immediate responses to crises or shocks, ex ante protective measures such as income transfers and basic social investments are required, and safety nets protection linked to building trajectories toward more secured lives through longer term development policies and strategies.

⁴⁸ Cash transfers are an appropriate response to emergencies under three conditions: (i) targeted households lack access to food; (ii) food is generally available for those with purchasing power; and (iii) the risk of inflationary pressure is low (i.e. a depressed economy needs cash injection). According to Van der Boogaard et. al. (2004: 57), they require little infrastructure and are easier to implement than food transfers. Moreover, cash facilitates choice, can be used according to individual needs and priorities, and does have a positive influence on local and regional food production and markets.

⁴⁹ While general subsidies are relatively easy to administer, they are quite costly, absorbing a substantial share of budgetary resources, and benefiting all including the better-off households who can afford higher prices. They may also lead to market distortions. On the other hand, targeted subsidies involve higher administrative and management efforts, skills and cost, and are prone to corruption. However, they are cheaper and more effective in reaching the poor and vulnerable when properly managed.

⁵⁰ See Annex 6: Social Protection Policy Coordination and Programming

3.2.3 Improving stability of food supplies

Among other factors, food and nutrition insecurity in Afghanistan is a function of natural and man-made disasters. The Government has responded to the threat of disasters by establishing the NDMC and ANDMA. The UN, donor and NGO community also play a vital role in emergency preparedness and response through the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) and the Nutrition Cluster. The roles and responsibilities of the Government and other stakeholders in disaster preparedness and response are spelt out in the National Disaster Management Plan issued by ANDMA.⁵¹ The plan does not include long term recovery and rehabilitation arrangements, leaving such situations to be dealt with by line ministries or in situations of catastrophic disasters, by special institutions created to carry out recovery operations. MAIL and MoPH have taken on this challenge by formulating sector-based disaster risk management interventions focusing on mitigation, prevention, preparedness and response in the Food for Life component of the National Comprehensive Agriculture Production and Market Development and the Health for All Afghans NPPs, respectively.

Despite the existence of these institutional mechanisms, communities and households in the country continue to be victimized particularly by natural disasters. Infrastructure needed to make food available and accessible often languishes in disrepair for protracted periods with the low level of disaster awareness and knowledge on disaster risk management pervasive in such settings portending long term vulnerability to food and nutrition insecurity.

To minimize food supply instabilities and acute food shortages that have often contributed to malnutrition and other forms of vulnerability, the following strategic fields of action are foreseen:

- Integration of the Strategic Grain Reserves (SGR) mechanisms (with an initial volume of 200,000 MT) into Afghanistan's response mechanism to national and local food emergencies.⁵² The proper organizational set-up of the SGR (semi-autonomous body, subsidiary or department of MAIL or ANDMA), regulations and modalities of operation (e.g. procurement, management, strategic locations of the reserve stocks, stock rotation, conditions of stock release, possibility of borrowing from the reserve by other relief agencies to speed up emergency operations until new shipments arrive, etc.) need to be defined.⁵³ Furthermore, a combination of physical reserves with financial instruments of supply/price risk reduction (grain futures, contingency contracts) may be worth considering.
- Preparation and implementation of a community-based disaster management plan that ensures the restoration of livelihoods, protection and improvement of productive assets, rebuilding of community infrastructure, and building and strengthening of community resilience to natural disasters and shocks; and
- Establishment of a comprehensive and consistent framework for disaster preparedness and response that incorporates the recommended community-based disaster management plan and also clarifies conceptual ambiguities and fills gaps (i.e. specifying roles and linkages between stakeholders, devising alternative emergency assistance approaches and specific emergency nutrition interventions, integrating early warning and food and nutrition security information systems, and determining institutional and operational modalities of the SGR).

⁵¹ ANDMA, National Disaster Management Plan 2010, October 2010

⁵² "Disaster Preparedness and Response", FFL Programme (ARD-NPP 2, section 3.1).

⁵³ Lessons should be drawn from the few successes and the many failures of food security reserves

3.2.4 Improving food utilization and nutrition

Sub-component 4 of Component 2 of the Ministry of Public Health's Health for All Afghans NPP contains 8 deliverables intended to improve the nutritional status of the population. Planned measures include increasing awareness, ensuring food safety and quality, supplementation and requisite capacity building. The plans laid out in the NPP to address the country's severe problem of malnutrition are aligned with the Nutrition Action Framework (NAF), multi-sector involving the Government and its partners (e.g. UN agencies, donors and NGOs) whose goal is to reduce stunting in children aged 0-24 months by 10% (from an estimated 59% to 49%) by the end of 2016.⁵⁴

Implementing the Nutrition Action Framework

As an integral part of the Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSANA) and to assure the achievement of NAF's goal, the Government will work with development partners to address key technical and resource gaps that will enable participating ministries to undertake the following core interventions.⁵⁵

- Increasing food availability for food insecure families through food production and dietary diversification, food storage and preservation, and market availability by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL);
- Improving food access for food insecure families which entails food transfers, food for work, food for assets, poverty alleviation programs and community-based income generation programs by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and MAIL;
- Improving the quality of diets with emphasis on micronutrient supplementation and fortification by the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI);
- Improving care and feeding practices for infants and young children and self-care for pregnant women and adolescent girls with the main actions being infant and young child feeding, maternal and nutrition, preventing and treating nutritional disorders, counseling of adolescent girls and priority operations research by MoPH and the Ministry of Education (MoE); and
- Assuring the healthy absorption of nutrients by preventing infection through the establishment and maintenance of community water systems, community-led promotion and construction of household latrines, counseling on hygiene and sanitation through augmented community health service provision, de-worming of children and pregnant women, and full integration of nutrition at health facilities by MRRD, MoPH and MoE.

⁵⁴Given that weight data on infants in the first months of life will also offer insights on the prevalence of low birth weight, the indicator as a whole can serve as a measure of nutritional status in the first 1000 days.

⁵⁵ Nutrition Action Framework (Afghanistan). 2012.

Improving food safety and quality⁵⁶

Food safety and quality are paramount to improved food utilization, particularly efforts to reduce malnutrition. Unfortunately, the food safety and quality regime in Afghanistan is fraught with challenges. Despite efforts in recent times to improve the regulatory environment (i.e. the delineation of food safety and quality responsibilities between MoPH and MAIL), the country still lacks an effective food quality and safety policy, parallel and fragmented quality control are the norm, food standards and standardization capacity are weak, enforcement of quality control activities is poor, and laboratory facilities for monitoring biological and chemical hazards and trained human resources to staff them are absent. These shortcomings result in both the absence of meaningful controls in the food processing industries and relatively limited actions of regulatory agencies on food imports.

Therefore, the Government, in partnership with donors and UN agencies such as FAO and WFP, will focus on:

- Improving the regulatory environment, beginning with an assessment of the recent realignment of responsibility for specific aspects of food safety and quality and including establishment of the requisite policies and standards;
- Building the coordination and technical capacities of national (i.e. Afghanistan National Standards Agency) and sector-specific regulatory institutions by providing quality equipment, trained personnel and appropriate operating budgets; and
- As a matter of urgency, supporting the rapid enhancement of micronutrient analysis capacity and food safety in support of ongoing humanitarian and transitional programming, as well as national recovery and development.

3.2.5 Overarching and Cross-Cutting Issues

National Priority Programs and the AFSANA

Emanating from the Kabul Process of 2010 and designed within the framework of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), the 22 National Priority Programs (NPPs), 16 of which have so far been approved by the GoIRA and endorsed by the international community, seek to empower Afghans and their institutions for better service delivery, employment and income generation, protection of citizens' rights, and sustainable development and peace. They are grouped into 6 clusters namely security, human resource development, infrastructure development, private sector development, agriculture and rural development and governance. Each program contains goals and objectives, strategy for achieving objectives, an implementation plan and detailed costing of interventions.

⁵⁶ Food Safety refers to hazards, whether chronic or acute, that may make food injurious to the health of the consumer and food quality refers to all the other attributes that influence a product's value to the consumer including negative attributes such as spoilage, contamination with filth, discoloration, off-odors as well as positive attributes such as the origin, color, flavor, texture and processing method of the food.

The strategic objectives and cross-cutting themes (i.e. capacity development, women empowerment and increased financial resources) of the AFSANA are consistent with many components and/or subcomponents of several NPPs including National Water and Natural Resource Development, National Comprehensive Agriculture Production and Market Development, National Rural Access Program, Education for All and Health for All Afghans. One area that is not addressed as an integrated plan of action is social protection, which will require linking and developing appropriate interventions from several NPPs into a transformative, sustainable and cohesive programmatic approach.

Annex 3 exhibits the relationship of AFSANA’s strategic objectives to the NPPs.

Gender Mainstreaming

Women and girls in Afghanistan continue to encounter significant challenges in accessing opportunities in education, healthcare and economic development as well as participating in community and nation building. As a consequence and to facilitate implementation, the Government’s National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan (NAPWA) which seeks “To create an enabling economic and social environment that is conducive to the full development and realization of women’s economic potential” is also a National Priority Program.

The strategic approaches to enhancing food and nutrition security discussed in this chapter will not achieve the desired objectives and targets in the absence of gender mainstreaming. Generally, it must be ensured that all FNS programs and projects are gender sensitive and the resulting changes in the lives of women and girls are monitored. A number of specific and urgent actions include: (i) strengthening the role of women in agricultural, livestock and horticultural production through specific training, extension and support schemes; (ii) ensuring access to food through skills training for women and through social protection particularly for female headed households who currently are most vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity; (iii) facilitating and enhancing the participation of women in building the resilience of rural households to disasters; (iv) improving food utilization through women’s education, and special household economy support schemes such as home gardening, food processing and preservation; and (v) promoting self-care for pregnant women and adolescent girls and their access to improved water sources, sanitation facilities and health services.

Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability

It is recognized that climate change and a deteriorating natural resource base adversely impact food and nutrition security in both the short- and long-term. Recurring and increasingly severe disasters (i.e. droughts, floods) and diminished agricultural production potential obviously result in the absence of proactive adaptation strategies and environmentally-friendly cultivation. Consistent with Government plans, the AFSANA framework therefore addresses these threats to food and nutrition security through effective disaster preparedness and management and by the promotion of sustainable land use practices.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ See NPP 1, Component B “Natural Resource Development and Management”.

4. ROLES OF STAKEHOLDERS AND COORDINATION STRUCTURES

4.1 Stakeholders and Roles

There are multiple actors in the FNS space in Afghanistan. They include central government ministries and agencies, decentralized and local government institutions as well as UN-organizations, donor agencies, NGOs, civil society and the private sector organizations.

4.1.1 Central Government Entities

The main players at the central government level are MAIL, MRRD, MoPH, MoLSAMD and ANDMA. Others with direct or facilitating roles are MoCI, MoE, Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW), CSO, Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA), Ministry of Finance (MoF) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). Consistent with their institutional mandates and current comparative advantages, the main roles of these public entities in FNS are summarized below.

1. MAIL: Promoting agricultural production, productivity and markets in order to expand food availability and access, and contribute to improved food supplies stability and utilization.
2. MRRD: Providing basic services, strengthening governance, developing infrastructure and encouraging sustainable livelihoods for the rural population through public employment and productive safety net programmes that enhance access to food.
3. MoPH: Maintaining the health status of Afghans through actions to improve infant and young child feeding and care practices, control infectious diseases, provide micronutrients, prevent nutrition-related illnesses, and promote food safety.
4. MoLSAMD: Regulating labor conditions and managing skills development and social welfare programs including social safety nets and public transfers that facilitate access to food by disadvantaged segments of the population.
5. ANDMA: Overseeing disaster preparedness and coordinating emergency relief operations to facilitate stable food supplies and food access.
6. Other central government ministries with direct or facilitating roles in food and nutrition security are: (i) MoCI for food imports and processing regulation; (ii) MoE for school feeding and school gardens programs; (iii) MoEW for oversight of rural energy and water supply; (iv) CSO for collecting, analyzing and publishing food and nutrition data; (v) MoWA for the empowerment of women; (vi) MoF for managing public finance and expenditure and coordinating international financial assistance; and (vii) MoFA for overseeing development cooperation and other partnership agreements.

4.1.2 Other Stakeholders

The formulation of realistic food and nutrition security policies and strategies and their effective implementation also depends on the active involvement of local government institutions and non-governmental actors. The roles of such stakeholders in implementing the AFSANA are discussed below.

Local Government Institutions: Provincial departments and agencies of central government institutions, as well as other provincial, district and community administrations are expected, with respect to FNS, to: (i) provide data and information on the prevailing situation; (ii) identify and articulate problems; and (iii) be involved in implementing measures in their fields and areas of responsibility.

International and Local NGOs: Local and foreign NGOs currently operate a wide spectrum of projects and programmes related to food and nutrition security. They will continue to provide these services which include: (i) advocacy and awareness creation; (ii) mobilization and provision of material resources; (iii) technical assistance, particularly training and capacity building; and (iv) community mobilization. Furthermore, international NGOs (INGOs) will be expected to continue building the capacity of local NGOs in project planning, management, monitoring and other technical fields.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs): Farmer associations, women and youth organizations and other community groups will also play an important role in implementation through: (i) advocacy and articulation of the interests and needs of members; (ii) sensitization of members and launching of public campaigns (e.g. child nutrition, consumption habits, crop diversification, hygiene, home gardening, etc.); (iii) development of project and programme proposals; (iv) setting of priorities; (v) mobilizing and organizing members for action; and (vi) monitoring the implementation and impacts of interventions.

Private Sector: Private actors will: (i) lead efforts with respect to input supply, marketing, imports and exports, transport, and rural and urban micro-credit schemes; and (ii) contribute to farming, food processing, infrastructure improvement and organizational development.

International Partners: UN agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Health Organization (WHO), and donor organizations such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and European Union (EU) have contributed to Afghanistan’s growth and development over the years and are expected to do more as the country focuses less on relief and recovery and more on growth and development in the coming years. In support of the AFSANA, these partners are expected to provide resources for policy analysis and advice, financial and material aid, and technical assistance.

4.2 Coordination Structures

Institutional arrangements for coordinating the AFSANA **incorporate, and do not duplicate, structures envisaged by the NAF which is an integral part of this comprehensive framework.** Implementation will be led at the national level by a High Level Food and Nutrition Security Steering Committee (FNSSC), a Food and Nutrition Security Secretariat (Secretariat) attached to the FNSSC, and food and nutrition security Focal Points (FPs) at each core ministry or agency. Corresponding to the FNSSC at the subnational level will be a Provincial Food and Nutrition Security Committee (PFNSC) which will work with district and community authorities for coordination of FNS issues at the periphery.

The key responsibilities of each of these bodies are summarized below, with expanded terms of reference shown in **Annex 4**.

4.2.1 High-Level Food and Nutrition Steering Committee

The High-Level Food and Nutrition Steering Committee (FNSSC) is established to coordinate and supervise the implementation of FNS programs by government ministries and agencies and other stakeholders. The FNSSC is chaired by the 2nd Vice President and reports to the President and Cabinet who are responsible to take appropriate actions on all policy and/or budgetary matters recommended by the FNSSC.

Membership for the FNSSC will be drawn from the ranks of the following primary ministries and partners that are active in the food and nutrition security realm: (i) MAIL; (ii) MoPH; (iii) MoCI; (iv) MRRD; (v) MoF; (vi) MoWA; (vii) MoE; (viii) MoLSAMD; (ix) MoWE; and (x) ANDMA. The FNSSC will also comprise two representatives each of bilateral, multilateral, civil society/NGO and private sector partners and shall meet once every six months or more frequently if necessary.

4.2.2 Food and Nutrition Secretariat

The overriding role of the Food and Nutrition Security Secretariat is to support the High Level Steering Committee in the execution of all of its supervisory, coordination, monitoring, and communication responsibilities. The Secretariat shall be an autonomous unit housed in the Office of the 2nd Vice President with responsibility for the day-to-day operations associated with implementing the AFSANA including NAF.

The unit will be led by an Executive Director/Coordinator and will comprise a Food and Nutrition Security Officer, a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, a Communications Officer and additional staff when and if deemed necessary.

4.2.3 FNS Focal Points (FP)

To facilitate compliance with their responsibilities under the AFSANA, each core ministry and agency will appoint a Food and Nutrition Security Focal Point. The Focal Point will have three basic functions which are to: (i) coordinate implementation of the AFSANA at the technical level within the respective ministry or agency; (ii) serve as the hub for food, nutrition and vulnerability information within the ministry or agency; and (iii) liaise with the national-level Food and Nutrition Secretariat. The FNS Focal Point will report directly to the appropriate Deputy Minister/Deputy Director General at the agency.

4.3 Sub-National Level Coordination Mechanisms

Provincial, district and community authorities as well as local non-governmental stakeholders will be actively involved in the implementation of the AFSANA at the subnational level. As elaborated in **Annex 3**, they are responsible for coordination of AFSANA programmes, projects and activities including the determination of local priorities, monitoring of progress, and articulation of the goal, objectives and programs of AFSANA in the political subdivisions of the country.

However, the specification of uniform peripheral structures to provide oversight over the implementation of the AFSANA at this time may be premature due to apparent differences in governance capacities and the effectiveness of existing cross-sector coordination mechanisms across political subdivisions. Mindful of these challenges and pending a deliberate, participatory assessment of the readiness of provincial, district and community authorities as well as the efficiency of alternative local institutional arrangements for AFSANA coordination, the Provincial Development Committee (PDC) led by the Governor will determine priorities and monitor execution of the Agenda by provincial stakeholders. The PDC will report to the High Level Steering Committee through the FNS Secretariat on matters relating to the AFSANA and its membership, which already includes departments of national agencies represented on the FNSSC (i.e. DAIL, DRRD and PPHD), will be enlarged by the addition of appropriate non-public actors whenever issues regarding the AFSANA are to be discussed.

A similar interim arrangement will also be put in place to ensure that District Development Assemblies (DDAs) and Community Development Committees (CDCs) are charged to coordinate AFSANA at their respective governance levels. With many of the planned food and nutrition security interventions in the AFSANA destined for implementation at the local level, it is critical that DDAs and CDCs be capacitated with sensitization materials and techniques to enable them play significant mobilization roles until permanent institutions are established.

4.4 Imperatives for building the capacities of coordination structures

The central and peripheral coordination structures designed for implementation of the AFSANA will require sustained and targeted support from the Government and the international community to effectively execute their responsibilities, particularly because they are either new arrangements or existing ones charged with additional tasks and heightened expectations. In Afghanistan's complex, challenging environment wrought by protracted conflict that devastated institutional capacities, the magnitude, quality and timeliness of assistance are defining.

Many public sector entities are relatively large and growing but are enamored with weak human resource bases, poor business processes, and severely limited program implementation capabilities. Despite institutional strengthening efforts in the recent past at several of these entities (e.g. change management programs at MAIL, MRRD), substantial barriers to reform persist including inadequate coordination between central organizations and local agencies and within units at the same agency. The World Bank is now executing a \$350 million Capacity Building for Results (CBR) project which aims to "improve the capacity and performance of core line ministries responsible for national priority programs" through the provision of technical assistance, capable staff, and training and internship opportunities.

Given the limitations of the CBR and other undertakings, a pooled-funding mechanism or any other appropriate approach reflecting the necessity for coherent delivery of AFSANA interventions will be established by Government and its partners. This support will be initially targeted to improving coordination and program management by the Secretariat that will serve the High Level Food and Nutrition Security Steering Committee chaired by the 2nd Vice President, Focal Points at core ministries or agencies with food and nutrition security responsibilities, Provincial Food and Nutrition Security Committees and relevant district and community authorities.

5. FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY INFORMATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

5.1 Food and Nutrition Information Systems

Many agencies and organizations provide relevant data and information on the FNS situation in Afghanistan. They include: (i) the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) of the CSO and MRRD; (ii) agricultural statistics from MAIL and nutrition data from MoPH and UNICEF; (iii) early warning information and vulnerability data generated by Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS-Net), WFP's Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping (VAM) unit and the Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) of the FAO; and (iv) rapid emergency assessments by ANDMA, WFP and NGOs.

The multiplicity and disaggregation of information sources makes it difficult to obtain a comprehensive and consistent picture of the food and nutrition environment, rendering the design and implementation of appropriate response strategies, monitoring of progress and results of interventions, and gauging trends and changes very challenging.

5.1.2 Strategic approaches to improve FNS information

An effective FNS information system provides countrywide baseline information on FNS determinants, regular updates on the FNS situation, early warning information on hazard risks and likely implications for FNS security, and rapid emergency need assessments when a disaster occurs. Typical steps and features consist of data collection, data management, data analysis and communication.

Planned measures to improve the agricultural data and information base already include:⁵⁸ (i) strengthening data and information base institutional framework; (ii) undertaking land cover change analysis; (iii) collecting and disseminating agricultural production, marketing, trade and export data; (iv) improving agro-meteorology and early warning system; (v) strengthening management information systems; (vi) developing an information gateway to geo-spatial information system; and (vii) improving the system for surveys.

These measures will bring substantial improvements to agricultural data generation and information management if complemented by relevant FNS data and information from other sectors, particularly non-farm and social sectors, and conceived in the context of an overall monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for food and nutrition security. Such a system would link FNS situation analysis and response analysis along the lines of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) which is currently being introduced in Afghanistan. By utilizing available information to classify the nature and severity of the FNS situation, IPC serves the needs of decision makers and renders food and nutrition security actions more effective, needs-based, strategic, and timely.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ "Data and Information Base" of the ARD NPP 2 "Food for Life" Programme

⁵⁹ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, Technical Manual Version 2.0, Final Review Draft, October 2011

5.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

5.2.1 Objectives of the System

In general, the M & E System for FNS will ensure surveillance of the FNS situation in Afghanistan, record progress in implementing the AFSANA, and track its results and impacts. Its specific purposes would be to provide stakeholders and the public with up-to-date information on the FNS situation, inform them of progress in implementing the AFSANA, keep abreast of the attainment of planned FNS objectives, and identify deficiencies, if any, in the design or implementation of the AFSANA and propose appropriate adjustments.

5.2.2 Methods and Instruments

- Undertaking Logical framework (Log frame) analysis to: (i) establish a clear hierarchy of objectives through clarification of cause-effect relationships between the overall objectives, specific objectives and planned outputs at various levels; (ii) determine appropriate indicators to measure progress towards achievement of the objectives; (iii) identify sources of data to be used in measuring the indicators; and (iv) identify economic, political, social and environmental conditions which are important to achieving FNS objectives. Log frames will have to be developed for each FNS project and programme implemented under the AFSANA framework and then compiled into an overall Log frame.
- Compilation of suitable, agreed indicators for measuring the performance of FNS interventions in attaining planned objectives following development of a consolidated Log frame matrix for the AFSANA.
- Establishment of a data bank of all relevant FNS programmes and projects to inform policy makers and the High Level Steering Committee regarding interventions and to facilitate coordination. The data bank will make use of existing information collected by various stakeholders (e.g. MIS of MAIL and registry of projects operated by FSAC).
- Linkage and eventual integration of FNS information systems operated by different stakeholders.
- Harmonization of M & E approaches by different agencies concerned with FNS interventions with respect to methodology (e.g. Log frame analysis), reporting formats and timeframes based on guidelines prepared by the Food and Nutrition Secretariat.

5.2.3 Operational Considerations

Monitoring and evaluating the policy and strategic framework is a genuine function of the High Level Steering Committee, supported by the Secretariat. M & E will be performed through a hierarchical, interactive structure that builds on the systems of related programmes and projects subsumed under the framework. The following functions will be performed:

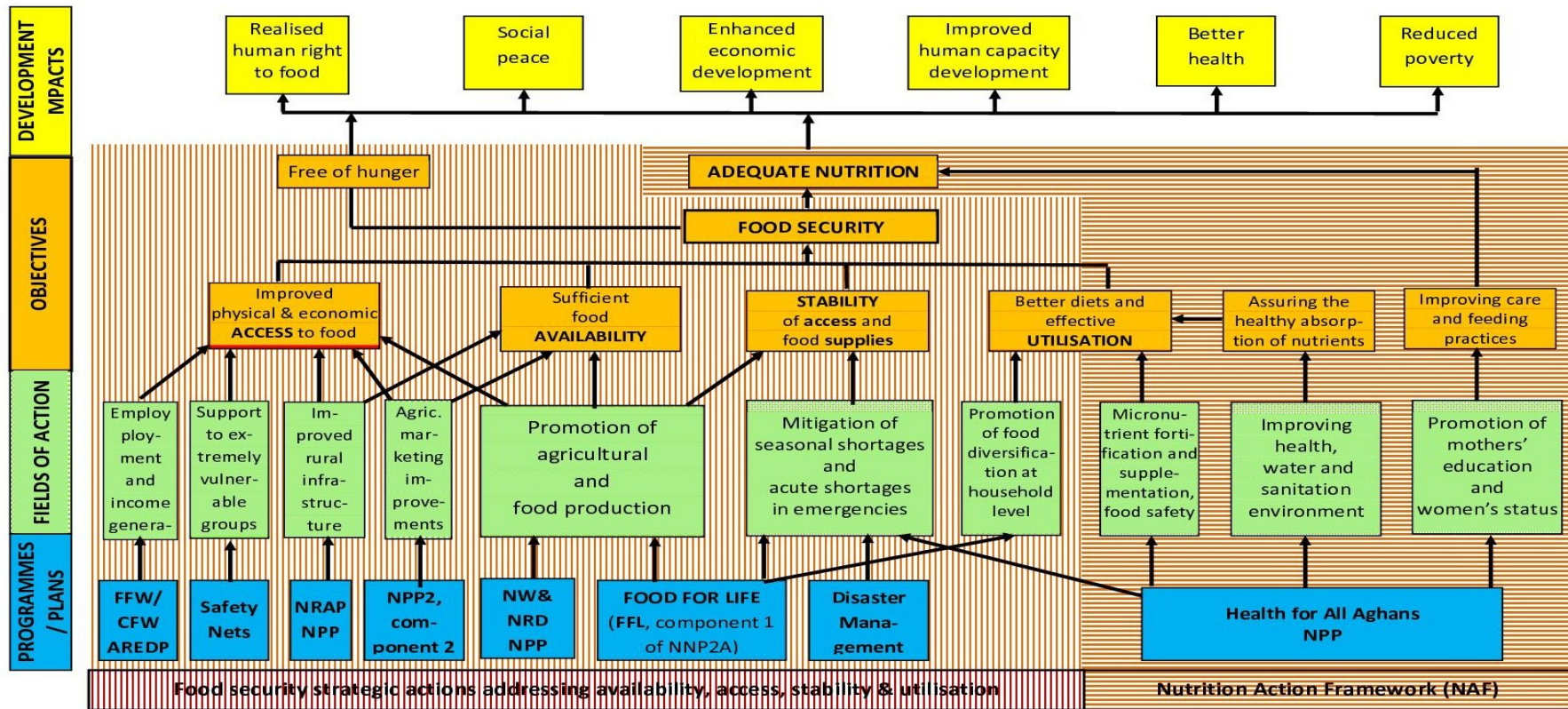
- At the project/programme level where monitoring is currently carried out by implementing agencies, reports will be prepared and presented to appropriate parties at ministries and agencies under whose jurisdiction said projects and programmes are being implemented, and to the Secretariat.
- The Secretariat will also receive evaluation reports on FNS interventions from stakeholders.
- The Secretariat will then compile these monitoring and evaluation reports and prepare summary reports containing major findings, conclusions and recommendations for the High Level Steering Committee.

The High Level FNS Steering Committee may order evaluations of specific FNS interventions or, as appropriate, evaluations of the implementation of the overall framework.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Architecture of the AFSANA

Comprehensive Strategic Framework for Food and Nutrition Security in Afghanistan: Objectives, Fields of Action, Programs and Development Impacts



Annex 2

Relationship of Strategic FNS Objectives to National Priority Programs

Strategic FNS Objective	Most Relevant National Priority Program
Assured availability of sufficient food	National Water and Natural Resource Development; National Comprehensive Agriculture Production and Market Development National and Regional Resource Corridor Program;
Improved economic and physical access to food	National Rural Access Program; Sustainable Decent Work Through Skills Development and Job-Rich Growth; National Energy Supply Program; Integrated Trade and SME Support
Ensured stability of food supplies	National Water and Natural Resource Development; National Comprehensive Agriculture Production and Market Development; National Rural Access Program National and Regional Resource Corridor Program;
Adequate food utilization	Health for All Afghans; National Comprehensive Agriculture Production and Market Development
Cross-cutting Effects, particularly on capacity building	Financial and Economic Reforms; Capacity Development to Accelerate NAPWA Implementation; Education for All; National Program for Local Governance; Sustainable Decent Work through Skills Development and Job-Rich Growth

Annex 3:

Terms of Reference of Coordination Structures

A. Terms of Reference of the High Level Food and Nutrition Security Steering Committee.

- (1) Supervise and coordinate implementation of the AFSANA by national and international stakeholders;
- (2) Assess progress and results related to the implementation of the AFSANA and approve adjustments in design and implementation when deemed necessary;
- (3) Promote inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordination of FNS interventions including those related to the Nutrition Action Framework (NAF);
- (4) Define strategic food and nutrition security priorities;
- (5) Plan appropriate responses to short term food and nutrition security crises and related shocks in coordination with the National Disaster Management Commission;
- (6) Identify where inter-sectoral coordinated action is needed to address long-term food and nutrition insecurity issues and propose solutions for tackling such developments;
- (7) Promote FNS awareness among all sectors of the population;
- (8) Devise ways to incorporate FNS strategic actions into the work programs of relevant sector ministries and agencies;
- (9) Advise Government on food and nutrition security matters including how to comply with international commitments and obligations;
- (10) Establish subcommittees and/or working groups to execute the responsibilities of the FNSC whenever deemed necessary;
- (11) Facilitate the design and implementation of joint food and nutrition security programmes; and
- (12) Communicate policies, priorities, targets and results of the AFSANA to stakeholders and the nation.

B. Terms of Reference of the Food and Nutrition Secretariat

- (1) Facilitate the coordination of planning and implementation of food and nutrition security interventions;
- (2) Promote integrated and consistent responses to emergency and structural food and nutrition insecurity problems;
- (3) Ensure that sector plans, programs and projects with implications for food and nutrition security are consistent with the AFSANA;
- (4) Assess the performance of FNS interventions on the basis of monitoring and evaluation reports and other reviews and analyses prepared by stakeholders;
- (5) Initiate evaluations of FNS interventions when and where deemed appropriate;
- (6) Facilitate the planning, implementation and evaluation of action plans of the AFSANA;
- (7) Interact with and provide all necessary information to stakeholders including liaising with development partners on FNS issues;
- (8) Ensure the smooth flow and exchange of FNS information among all stakeholders;
- (9) Receive, review and disseminate to the High Level Steering Committee monitoring and related reports of food security programs and projects; and
- (10) Prepare regular reports on the implementation and progress of the AFSANA for the High Level FNS Steering Committee.

C. Terms of Reference of Focal Points

- (1) Provide advice on food and nutrition security policy and strategic issues;
- (2) Coordinate ministry or agency's interaction with FNS stakeholders;
- (3) Contribute to the preparation of FNS project proposals;
- (4) Receive and review monitoring reports of food and nutrition security related programmes and projects;
- (5) Ensure that food and nutrition security concerns are well reflected in other policies and programmes of the ministry or agency;
- (6) Prepare sensitisation material for stakeholders at the sub-national level; and
- (7) Prepare reports on progress being made by the ministry or agency in the execution of the AFSANA for the ministry/agency and the Secretariat.

D. General Responsibilities of Subnational Coordination Structures

The general responsibilities of provincial, district and community structures with respect to local coordination and supervision of the AFANSA are the following:

- (8) Develop and maintain a clear understanding of the food and nutrition security status of different populations across the political subdivision;
- (9) Ensure that the AFANSA promotes the rights of all Aghans to food and improved nutrition in the political subdivision;
- (10) Advocate the goal and objectives of the AFANSA in the political subdivision as well as at all other levels of governance;
- (11) Ensure congruence and synergy between the AFANSA and other strategies, programmes and plans in the food and nutrition security domain to avoid duplication;