

# Monitoring food aid and food assistance

REVIEWING EXISTING SYSTEMS, IDENTIFYING OPTIONS TO ADDRESS  
REMAINING DATA GAPS UNDER THE MANDATE OF THE CCP/CSSD

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# **Overview**

- 1. Background**
- 2. Review of existing food aid/assistance data and trends**
- 3. CCP proposal for a new monitoring system**
- 4. Potential challenges implementing the CCP proposal**
- 5. Possible next steps**

# 1. Background

- **Challenge**: Consultative Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal (CSSD) increasingly limited in its ability to monitor food aid flows:
  - i. Since 2000, CSSD reporting was limited, practically seized after 2010.
  - ii. Discontinuation of the WFP's INTERFAIS system (2012).
  - iii. Reduced reporting by individual donors, in the presence of numerous changes:
    - Decline in international shipments/transactions.
    - Shift from food aid to food “assistance”.
    - Shift in modalities (to local procurement, triangular, cash, vouchers, etc.).
    - Shift from programme & project aid → emergency aid/assistance.
- **Response**: Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP) initiated a review of CSSD operations to propose new system to address the information gap

## 2. Review of existing food aid data and trends

Review of available information and global trends required to guide the development of the new system's structure

- Main sources on global food aid data:
  - i. WFP INTERFAIS – global coverage, monitored quantities, local validation, but system suspended.
  - ii. FAC – receives data only on monetary values of food assistance from its members.
  - iii. OECD – collects data from 30 DAC and 20 non-DAC members, only monitors monetary values of food aid/assistance.
  - iv. Individual countries and NGOs maintain databases, irregular and partial coverage.
  - v. WTO monitoring as part of the Nairobi (2015) commitments on export disciplines.

## 2. Review of existing food aid/assistance data and trends

- Main donors remained mostly unchanged over last two decades:  
USA, EU (EC & Members States), Japan, Brazil, Canada, China and more recently the UAE – account for approximately 80-90% of global transactions
- However, there has been a shift in global food aid trends:
  - i. Increase in supply of food aid in emergency contexts.
  - ii. Decline in in-kind programme and project-based transactions, significant increase in the *share* of emergency flows.
  - iii. Increase in local/regional purchases and cash-based interventions.

### 3. CCP proposal for a new monitoring system

1. Capture global food aid transactions in quantities of food products (and/or values)
  2. Incur zero-costs
- System would be housed in FAO's Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS).
  - GIEWS would administer the questionnaire and maintain the database.
  - GIEWS to focus on non-WFP flows, provided INTERFAIS information remains available for WFP flows.
  - GIEWS to provide summarized data to CSSD on a quarterly basis (Crop Prospects and Food Situation).
  - CSSD would only meet on demand.
  - Questionnaire-based monitoring system was proposed given:
    - Low cost.
    - High concentration of donors.

## 4. Potential challenges implementing the CCP proposal

Main challenges foreseen:

1. No legally-binding framework to obligate donors to notify food aid/assistance to CSSD.
2. Questionnaire fatigue, five international organizations approaching the same countries/donors for similar/same information.
3. Will WFP continue to provide data for WFP flows? Non-WFP flows?
4. Zero-cost constraint for FAO/EST restricts capacity of system to capture all types of food aid data.
5. Limited capacity to validate data at the recipient (country) level.  
Validation becomes an overarching constraint for all monitoring systems in the presence of local procurement.

## 5. Possible next steps

1. Seek greater collaboration with partner organizations to minimise duplication in data collection.
2. Seek greater collaboration with partner organizations to improve data access/dissemination.
  - Make data available from the various collectors on 1 single platform?
  - Collate, compare and triangulate information
  - Use the existing AMIS platform and comparison tools?
3. Explore cost-efficient ways to validate data at the recipient level (spot checks).
4. Investigate technological potential to monitor all modes of food aid/assistance, capture shifts and emerging trends in transactions.