Reaching Consensus on a Global Dietary Diversity Indicator for Women
Washington, DC, July 15–16, 2014
Dietary diversity indicators (1)

- DD is measured as the number of foods or **food groups** consumed over a reference time period (**day**)

- DD indicators are proxies for micronutrient adequacy of the diet

- **Women** have greater micronutrient needs related to reproductive functions
Dietary diversity indicators (2)

DD assessment reflects only one dimension of diet quality: micronutrient adequacy

Other dimensions (balance, moderation) are becoming increasingly important public health concerns globally, in context of transition
Background of the Women’s Dietary Diversity Project

- **WDDP-I** 2005-2010, validation work using five 24h intake datasets to identify and develop candidate indicators as valid proxies of the gold standard. No single indicator based on a standard number of food groups or cut-points identified for global use.

  FANTA/USAID convened and funded the project, IFPRI led the validation work.

- **WDDP-II** 2012-2014, responding to requests for standardized indicators for assessing micronutrient quality of women’s diets, FAO re-convened some members from the WDDP-I to do further work to derive a dichotomous indicator useful for global, national and sub-national dietary assessment for women of reproductive age.

  FAO convened and funded the WDDP-II group; IRD led the validation work; FANTA/FAO sponsored the consensus workshop
Tasks of the Consensus Meeting, July 15-16

• Assess the WDDP-II analysis of nine 24h intake datasets to validate candidate food group proxy indicators for micronutrient adequacy of women’s diets

• Select one of two candidate indicators recommended by the core WDDP-II group for global diet assessment

• Discuss appropriate uses and limitations of a global indicator for other purposes (e.g., in programs)

• Discuss issues around operationalization

• Discuss plans to move forward and communicate
Summary of recommendations from the Consensus Meeting, July 15-16

• We recommend a dichotomous indicator for dietary diversity assessment;
• We recommend a positive (as opposed to a negative) indicator based on whether or not women meet a mean probability of adequacy (MPA) > 60%;
• We recommend a 10 food group indicator (with a 15 g restriction per food group) for dietary diversity assessment in women;
• We recommend a cut-off of 5 or more food groups

The indicator will be called Minimum Dietary Diversity-Women (MDD-W)
Comparing the currently used FGI – 9 with the MDD-W (FGI-10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FGI-9 currently used by USAID programmes and included in FAO Guidelines</th>
<th>FGI-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 All starchy staples</td>
<td>1 All starchy staples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 All legumes and nuts</td>
<td>2 Beans and peas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 All dairy</td>
<td>3 Nuts and seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Organ meat</td>
<td>4 All dairy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Flesh foods and misc. small animal protein</td>
<td>5 Flesh foods (including organ meat and miscellaneous small animal protein)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Eggs</td>
<td>6 Eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Vitamin A-rich dark green leafy vegetables</td>
<td>7 Vitamin A-rich dark green leafy vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Other vitamin A-rich vegetables and fruits</td>
<td>8 Other vitamin A-rich vegetables and fruits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Other fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>9 Other vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Other fruits</td>
<td>10 Other fruits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nutritional meaning of MDD-W

Desirable micronutrient-dense food groups are likely to be consumed by women scoring 5 or more groups out of 10

• Across the 9 datasets from WDDP-II, women consuming 5 or more food groups were more likely to consume:
  – At least one animal-source food (84%)
  – Legumes, beans, nuts and/or seeds (84%)
  – 2 or more fruit/vegetable groups (98%)
Population-level assessment of women’s dietary diversity

Groups/populations with a higher proportion at or above the cut-off are likely to have higher average micronutrient adequacy across 11 micronutrients:

- Based on the 9 datasets from WDDP-II, among women consuming 5 or more food groups, there was an increase of approximately **15 percentage points** in the mean probability of micronutrient adequacy compared to women consuming <5.

- This does NOT mean that the population at or above the cut-point has adequate intake of ALL 11 micronutrients in the MPA.
Uses of the MDD-W

• Assessment of dietary diversity at national and sub-national levels (inclusion in large-scale population-based surveys) *(validated for this)*

• Monitoring indicator for projects with food-based interventions and **plausible impact pathway for dietary diversification** *(not validated for tracking change – need experience)*

• Always consider seasonality

• **SHOULD NOT** be used for individual level assessment **OR** Screening
Dietary diversity indicators in M&E

• Programmes that aim to improve diets may choose to assess change in women’s DD in multiple ways

  a) against the target of consuming 5 groups out of ten (used as a dichotomous indicator)

  b) change in mean DD score to capture overall improvement even at the lower ends of DD (used as a quasi-continuous indicator)
Documentation on the MDD-W

• The analysis report produced by IRD will soon be completed and posted at the FAO website

• A short summary of the WDDP-II project results and a slide set will soon be available at the FANTA website for anyone’s use

• A Users’ manual on MDD-W, similar to the IYCF manuals, will be produced within the next year