



Viet Nam

**Technical
Working Group**
Established: 1999

Membership

UN: FAO; UNDP; UNICEF;
WFP

Government: National
Committee for Food Security;
National Institute of Nutrition
(NIN)

NGOs: Action Aid; Association
of Vietnamese Gardeners
(VACVINA); Swiss Association
for International Cooperation
(Helvetas); Viet Nam
Farmer's Union

Donors: Ford Foundation
Bilateral Organizations:
Australian Agency for
International Development
(AusAID); European Union
(EU); Embassy of Denmark

Activities: Development of
food insecurity and
vulnerability information and
mapping systems (FIVIMS);
public awareness of food
security; technical support to
the Government on food
security issues.



IFAD/L. DEMATEIS

Providing fora for advocacy and FIVIMS

In Viet Nam, the Network Technical Working Group is the only national forum and partnership group on food security and since its inception, has worked on three interrelated areas: support to the development of food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping systems (FIVIMS); advocacy and knowledge sharing to build awareness about food security in Viet Nam; and strengthening the technical capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).

Developing information on the food insecure and vulnerable

Producing and distributing information on vulnerable populations is a crucial, practical measure to address food security. The World Food Summit called on all countries to improve the production of relevant information on the food insecure and vulnerable as a first step to undertake short and long-term interventions and advised that countries engage in the development of food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping systems (FIVIMS).

It is widely recognized that, although Viet Nam is the second

// Food insecurity arises mostly from households not having sufficient income to buy food. Despite Viet Nam's significant economic progress in recent years, poverty remains fairly widespread. Research into the causes of poverty indicates that these are: isolation (geographic and social); high risks (from flooding, typhoons, diseases); inadequate access to available resources (land, credit); lack of environmental sustainability; and inadequate participation at the local level in the formulation of poverty alleviation initiatives. In the present economic and social context of the country, food insecurity and poverty are the two sides of the same coin.' Statement of the Technical Working Group, Food Security – What is the long-term vision?



'VIET NAM 2010: ENTERING THE 21ST CENTURY', 2000





IFAD/L. DEMATTEIS

largest rice exporter in the world, the country still has a high incidence of child undernutrition. The development of national information systems to map vulnerability is therefore an essential step in addressing this discrepancy.

Shortly after its creation in 1999, the Technical Working Group organized a workshop on 'Household Food Security: a Conceptual Framework and Indicators', in order to improve understanding of household food security concepts, identify appropriate indicators and use these to prepare a conceptual framework. The workshop was also significant in that it opened debate about FIVIMS. Since then, the Group has played a catalytic role in furthering its development.

For example, it set up a cross-sectoral FIVIMS working group, chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and with representatives from the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLISA), the Vietnam Women's Union (VWU) and the General

Statistics Office in order to initiate preliminary activities. A brainstorming session led to the identification of the most vulnerable groups in Viet Nam and a workable set of food security indicators was prepared. An inventory of available FIVIMS-related data was then produced and sent to the national FIVIMS focal point in MARD with the aim of creating a FIVIMS database. These national partners have also recently prepared draft profiles on the country's most vulnerable groups which, although still in their early stages of development, lay the groundwork for future concerted efforts to develop practical information systems on the food-insecure and vulnerable in Viet Nam.

Providing advocacy

The Technical Working Group has also campaigned for greater awareness of food security in Viet Nam through UN Web sites and meetings. A comprehensive inventory of activities being undertaken on food security issues in the country by the Government, UN, donors and NGOs was



FAO



compiled and posted on the UN country Web site in Viet Nam. More recently, the Group helped place food security in Viet Nam more prominently in the country's development agenda by contributing a paper to the joint World Bank / Asian Development Bank / UNDP Vietnam Development Report 2001: 'Viet Nam 2010: Entering the 21st Century'. In its text, the Technical Working Group discusses the long-term vision for food security in the country; the key steps needed to attain the vision; the key monitorable indicators to be considered; and the role of different partners in fostering food security – UN, government and civil society. Particular reference is made to the model of the Thematic Group as a key mechanism to support and coordinate food security interventions at the country level. This paper was given wide coverage at the Consultative Group Meeting (Hanoi, 13-15 December 2000): an event chaired by the Government and World Bank in Viet Nam, which allowed both the Government and the donor community to take stock of, and develop new directions for joint cooperation.

Building capacities

The Group devotes concerted efforts on building the capacities of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and acts as the technical support organ of MARD on food security issues. It is largely due to the Group that there is a gradual acknowledgement in the country that poverty is a dimension of food security and that it therefore warrants inclusion in national policy. This was underlined at a recent Government Seminar on Food Security in April 2001, where participants discussed the inter-ministerial role of MARD

in the conception, implementation and monitoring of food security activities, particularly within the framework of poverty reduction programmes. Following the recommendations made at the seminar, MARD requested an analysis of the extent of the food security problem in one of the country's poorest provinces – Ha Giang – so as to better target food security activities. As a further commitment to food security, the Government is planning to establish a Food Security Information Unit in MARD and use the available data to prepare future MARD policies that target the food insecure.

The Technical Working Group is widely acknowledged as one of the most active development fora in Viet Nam – creating knowledge and understanding of food security at all levels. However, as recent activities show, the Group has moved beyond a platform for discussion to being a highly effective mechanism for developing concrete and practical actions for food security in Viet Nam.

What is FIVIMS?

The causes of food insecurity and vulnerability can be as diverse as poverty, climatic conditions, inadequate marketing infrastructure, civil strife and war.

Food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping systems (FIVIMS) are systems that assemble, analyse and disseminate information on who the food insecure are, where they are located, and why they are food insecure, nutritionally vulnerable or at risk. The World Food Summit Plan of Action (1996) recommended that such systems be established at the global, national and subnational levels in efforts to achieve Summit goals of reducing undernutrition and achieving food for all.

Many national Thematic Groups on Rural Development and Food Security have identified the development of national FIVIMS as a priority for action, including those in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, the Gambia, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Lebanon, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Viet Nam and Yemen.

