**Near-real-time monitoring of food crisis risk factors
for improved early warning early action**

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The most recent *Global Report on Food Crises* finds that 135 million people in 55 countries faced crisis level acute food insecurity in 2019 - driven by conflict, weather extremes, and economic shocks. With hunger on the rise, there is a clear need to improve early warning systems and other tools to prevent food crises. One way to do this is to improve and increase the use of real-time monitoring of food crisis risk factors in early warning early action systems. Real-time monitoring includes production-related information, climate and conflict data, price information, and other factors to identify the likelihood of acute food insecurity and help policy makers enact timely policy responses. It monitors actual developments and can be used to update assumptions, validate or change projections, and adjust programming quickly.

A recent Food Security Portal webinar took stock of the advances in real-time monitoring tools and approaches. In follow-up, this online discussion focuses on the next steps in improving, scaling up, and integrating real-time monitoring in existing early warning early action systems and policy responses to food crisis risk. Specifically, this discussion aims to share experiences related to the role of real-time monitoring in existing early warning systems, experiences in integrating real-time monitoring into existing monitoring platforms and tools, research in this area, and how to make real-time monitoring actionable by governments and regional institutions.

**The purpose of the discussion:**

This discussion in one in a string of policy dialogues organized by the Food Security Portal that seeks to catalyze research and policy efforts to utilize real-time monitoring in food crisis risk assessment and prevention. In partnering with the FSN Forum, the Food Security Portal would like to invite experts and stakeholder worldwide to share their experience with the use of early warning systems, their pros and cons, features and gaps. In addition, we would like to learn from your experiences in integrating early warning data into policy work and the challenges faced along the way.

**Questions:**

1. How should real-time monitoring be designed and utilized to strengthen existing early warning systems and support preventative policy responses to food crisis risk.
2. What are examples of successful policy responses at country level that have been guided by existing monitoring tools?
3. Local food prices are one way to get a temperature check of local market conditions, but high frequency local market price data is not widely available. Where are the gaps such as this one in real-time monitoring and how can these be addressed both in a research and policy context?
4. Advances in early warning technologies and data must be matched by developing capacity within institutions at the country and regional level to transform relevant data into preventative actions. What is needed to initiate and scale up the use of real-time monitoring in early warning early action systems by regional organizations, national governments, and other country level institutions? What are the technical and policy-related challenges associated with the use of such tools?
5. Over the years, a series of different early warming early action systems have been developed by various organizations. How could greater collaboration among the various tools and approaches facilitate their effectiveness in driving policy responses?

We thank you very much for your valuable comments and look forward to learning from your experiences.

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