

## **Online consultation on the V0 Draft of the Report proposed by the HLPE Steering Committee and the Project Team**

Overall, I was very interested to read more about the expanded concept and components of food security to include agency and sustainability. Sustainability is a key dimension that has long been recognized by Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous food sovereignty takes into consideration sustainability as well as agency in the form of self-determination over food systems, but perhaps more importantly food environments. The conceptual model incorporates these dimensions along with a range of nutrition and health determinants. Distal determinants, I would argue, however, must also be viewed from a more structural perspective, taking factors such as colonization, knowledge loss, and patterns of urban migration into account. Those who move or relocate frequently experience food insecurity, as resources are spent moving from reserve to urban spaces, or within cities. Indigenous women, children, and single parent families have also previously been identified as being most likely to be food insecure within Canada (1). An examination of place-based and socially situated influences on food choice and Indigenous food environments is severely lacking from the literature, as is a focus on community-based initiatives and measures of data collection. There is a need, I believe to address both external and internal dimensions of food environments to take into account the structural determinants of FSN. Food environment frameworks that tend to focus on individual health behaviours need to be adapted to recognize that Indigenous food use is a central link between Indigenous Peoples and the land. Food environment frameworks are useful for understanding the socio-ecological determinants of food choice (2), as this approach places individual factors such as knowledge and preference within diverse environmental settings (3). Much of the work on food environment frameworks has not yet, however, incorporated the unique structural determinants impacting Indigenous food environments.

Therefore in terms of data collection and analysis tools, it is imperative I think to look beyond addressing individual and household barriers to accessing high quality foods from both the market system along with Indigenous food systems. These food environments are complex and refer to the socio-cultural meanings, patterns of acquisition, processing techniques, use, composition, health and nutritional consequences for Indigenous Peoples (4). Recent studies highlight the need to continue to build upon multi-jurisdictional efforts at the community, regional, provincial and national levels to reduce rates of food insecurity and improve nutritional status in Indigenous communities (5). A determinants of health and approach takes into consideration the intersectoral dimensions and a more comprehensive understanding of the structural, including historical and both the physical and social environmental determinants on dietary practices (6). Community priorities and values also need to be recognized and included within relevant frameworks impacting food environments. Improving their stability thereby ensures that local ecosystems are healthy and can sustainably support Indigenous Peoples' agency and control over their local food environments through data sovereignty.

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## References

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