

CLOSING THE GAPS - LINKING FOOD SECURITY INFORMATION TO EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING

My name is Dominique Blariaux, I am working for the European Commission in Food Security and have been working for many years, in several countries, in the field of food security and information systems (Niger, Malawi, Angola).

The increasing number of food crises, particularly in Africa, shows that prevention and response mechanisms need to be improved in order to address the determinants and the dynamic nature of food insecurity, at both national and regional levels. In particular, the link between the analysis of short, medium and long-term needs and response mechanisms should be strengthened in order to avoid any repeated mobilisation of emergency assistance and food aid.

In this context and in the light of the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, an effort should be made *to **harmonise donors' and governments' approaches, to strengthen the links between food security information/early warning systems and the development of effective response strategies***, considering the number and diversity of aid measures in the field of food security information and early warning systems, at the different geographical levels.

To improve linkages between the production of information and the development of effective response strategies, an **inclusive approach** leading as much as possible towards consensus-building between concerned stakeholders is a key condition of success. However, experience has shown that consensus building is a very difficult task, often hindered by political interference and, when achieved, does not always lead to decision making. The link between **'technical' consensus and decision making is difficult to make** partially because analysis of a food security situation, based on security information systems are often very technical and the 'translation' to a more political level are often difficult to make. The 'missing link' might be a **lack of 'communication' skills?**

Therefore I'd like to learn from your opinion and insights on this issue. Hopefully together we could look further into this issue and find possible solutions or good practices to **close the gaps in food security information systems and better link food security information with decision making.**

Regards,

Dominique Blariaux