

FSN FORUM DISCUSSION No. 45
**REVISING THE FOOD CHAPTER OF THE SPHERE
HANDBOOK**
FROM 19 OCTOBER TO 16 NOVEMBER 2009

NOTE:

The below topic is raised jointly by the 4 focal points (FP) of the chapter 3 (known as the “food chapter”) for the revision of the Sphere Handbook – Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (<http://www.sphereproject.org/>): Devrig Velly, (Food security FP, from ACF), Susan Thurstans (Nutrition FP, from Save the Children UK), Paul Turnbull and Walter Middleton (Co-chairs Food Aid FP, respectively from WFP and World Vision).

The Sphere Handbook has been one of the most widely recognised tools for improving humanitarian response, not only by NGOs but also, and increasingly, by United Nations agencies, host governments, donor governments and other actors involved in humanitarian response. For the Sphere Handbook to remain relevant, Sphere needs to keep in touch with changing practices in the context of humanitarian work, as well as technical innovations. To this end, and acknowledging the significant changes that have taken place since the 2004 edition, the Sphere Board has decided to revise the Sphere Project Handbook.

Dear FSN Forum colleagues,

For this final round of consultation via the FSN Forum we would like to have your feedback on specific questions related to the **nutrition component** and on **common topics** shared by the food security, nutrition and food aid components for the Sphere Handbook revision.

This discussion will reinforce the feedback from the initial FSN discussion on food security conducted in July-August and recent consultation meetings conducted in various countries (including Afghanistan, Ethiopia, India, Malawi, and Zambia).

The main nutrition components are comprised of six minimum standards within Chapter 3. We would like to invite FSN members to give feedback to the following questions in relation to these minimum standards.

1. **What are the indicators/guidance notes that need to be adjusted?** Please be specific, suggest actual changes and provide evidence based background knowledge or references to your suggestion
2. **What are the new standards which should be added, if any?** Please be specific, suggest ideas for the standards and accompanying indicators and guidance notes and provide evidence based background knowledge or references to your suggestion
3. **What information is missing that needs to be considered and reflected in the indicators/guidance notes or annexes?**

Moreover, please find below some further crosscutting questions:

1. **How to improve the analytical capacity?** Considering the minimum standards 1 and 2 of Food Security and Nutrition Assessment and Analysis (pages 111-117) and appendices 2 (pages 174-176) and 4 (pages 180-182) in chapter 3, what adjustments

need to be made to improve a common assessment, understanding and a better analysis of needs?

2. **How to better link analysis to action / integrated responses?** Referring to the appendix 3 (Food Security responses pages 177-179) what would you suggest to develop this appendix in order to reinforce integrated responses (Food Security, Nutrition and Food Assistance) in emergencies? Do you think a similar appendix is needed for nutrition and food aid interventions?
3. **Should Sphere (and specifically chapter 3) integrate emergency preparedness?** Considering the scope of Sphere (disaster response) how would you suggest the integration of preparedness measures, what tools would be referenced, be specific and suggest indicators/guidance notes
4. **How to integrate cash-based responses in Sphere?** Since the last revision there has been evidence that cash-based responses should play a growing role in humanitarian response to crisis. How should this be addressed in the new Sphere Handbook?

The full text can be found

In English:

http://www.sphereproject.org/component/option,com_docman/task,cat_view/gid,17/Itemid,26/lang,english/

In French:

http://www.sphereproject.org/component/option,com_docman/task,cat_view/gid,44/Itemid,26/lang,english/

In Spanish:

http://www.sphereproject.org/component/option,com_docman/task,cat_view/gid,46/Itemid,26/lang,english/

Your input will help finalising the first draft of the handbook (expected early 2010).

We thank you in advance for your contributions to this upcoming handbook revision and look forward to hearing from you!

Best regards

Susan Thurstans (Save the Children UK), Paul Turnbull (WFP), Walter Middleton (World Vision), Devrig Velly (ACF)