



Summary of Preliminary Results of SEFSec 2013-2014

More than one fourth of households are food insecure in Palestine

The annual Socio-Economic and Food Security (SEFSec) survey has been conducted annually since 2009 as a collaborative effort between the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics – PCBS and the Food Security Sector - FSS, co-led by FAO and WFP in close collaboration with UNRWA. Under the leadership of the FSS, a review of the SEFSec methodology has been carried out with the ultimate objective of improving the way the survey captures the various dimensions of food insecurity in Palestine (poverty, food consumption and resilience). The following are the main findings and trends based on this new methodology during the years 2013 and 2014.

- In 2014 food insecurity in Palestine is still very high, with more than one fourth of the population – 27 percent or 1.6 million people – being either severely or moderately food insecure (around 13 percent in each category) according to the annual socio-economic food security (SEFSec) survey. In 2014 Gaza and West Bank experienced food insecurity levels of 47 and 16 per cent, respectively.
- In the West Bank, general food insecurity levels are higher among refugees than among non-refugees (22 and 14 per cent respectively in 2014). Food security status for both refugee and non-refugees households has improved, for refugees around 2 percentage points, while non-refugees report a more significant improvement of around 8 percentage points.
- In Gaza, where refugees report lower food insecurity rates than non-refugees, incidence of food insecurity increases among both refugee and non-refugee households (about 1 and 3 percentage points respectively). This reflects a generalized food access decline in Gaza as a result of labour entitlement failure (+11 percentage points in the unemployment rate over one year) and a sharp increase in food price levels (+12 percent between May and August 2014).
- The percentage of food insecure households in refugee camps in 2014 is 46 and 29 percent respectively in Gaza and in West Bank. Food insecure households increased in West Bank (3 percentage points change) while in Gaza they have slightly reduced (by 3 percentage points).
- The negative impact on food access of the events affecting Gaza is particularly severe on urban households: the incidence of food insecurity increased by 3 percentage points between 2013 and 2014. In the West Bank urban households' incidence of food security improved by about 7 percentage points.
- Rural households, although still facing a high incidence of food insecurity (overall around 21 percent), improved significantly between 2013 and 2014, especially in Gaza. This could be explained by the capacity of agricultural households to compensate for the reduction in labour opportunities (labour entitlement) and the reduced availability of food due to the closure of tunnels (trade entitlement) with direct production of foodstuffs (production entitlement) that can be either directly consumed or sold to take advantage of higher food prices.
- In Palestine, around one fourth of male-headed households are food insecure as compared to around one third of female-headed households. In Gaza both female and male-headed households are almost evenly split between food secure and insecure. In the West Bank only 15 percent of male-headed households are food insecure as compared to 25 percent of female-headed households.

Why a new food insecurity measurement methodology

Globally there have been significant advances in measurement and proxy estimates of food security measurements since the original SEFSec analysis was conceived in 2007. Additionally there have been changes to Palestinian consumption patterns and socio-economic conditions.

Therefore the old methodology was considered not capable of capturing the dynamic complexity of the food security situation in Palestine. The socio-economic crisis, deriving from almost 70 years of turmoil, conflict and the occupation regime, required a more comprehensive analysis of the drivers of food insecurity in an attempt to provide a more accurate profile of the population.

Taken together, these changes and considerations prompted a review of the SEFSec methodology.

The new methodology was adopted for the first time for the 2014 survey (and retrospectively applied to the 2013 survey) that this statement refers to. As a result in the methodology change, the food security figures published until the SEFSec Report 2012 and in the June 2014 High Level Statement, which are based on the old methodology, are not comparable with the ones reported in this statement. Needless to say, cross-country comparisons can only be made between countries adopting the same methodology.

The SEFSec Report 2013-2014, expected to be released in Q1-2016, will provide more detailed analyses of the SEFSec 2013 and 2014 survey data as well as a full account of the methodology adopted therein, explaining why and how the SEFSec methodology has changed.

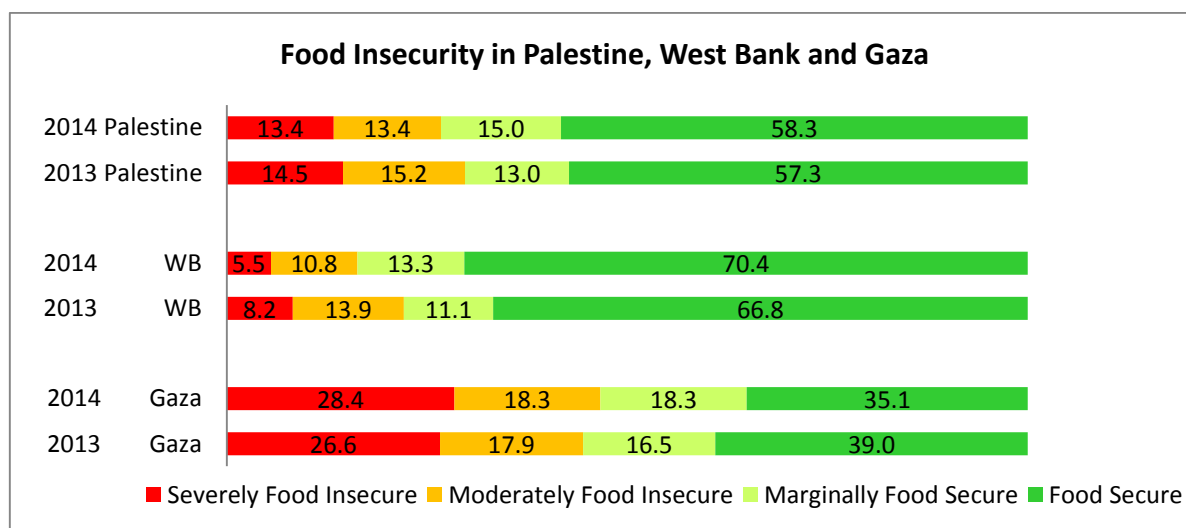
SEFSec 2013-2014 - Summary Report

More than one fourth of households are food insecure in Palestine

In 2014 food insecurity in Palestine¹ is still very high, with more than one fourth of the population – 27 percent² or 1.6 million people – food insecure, according to the annual food security (SEFSec) survey, a collaborative effort between the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Food Security Sector, co-led by FAO and WFP in close collaboration with UNRWA. In particular, the food insecure households are evenly split between the severely food insecure and moderately food insecure (around 13 percent for each), while the marginally food secure account for another 15 percent and the remaining 58 percent of households are food secure.³

Long standing restrictions on the movement of people and goods have severely undermined the living conditions in Palestine and reduced households' access to livelihoods. In Gaza, eight years of blockade have resulted in a gradual process of de-development and increasing food aid dependency. In the West Bank, physical obstacles such as the Barrier and checkpoints, along with administrative obstacles such as permit requirements and the designation of closed military areas, continue to impede Palestinians' access to services and resources.

In Gaza and in the West Bank, food insecurity is 47 percent and 16 percent respectively. The worsening of the situation in Gaza (a change of 2 percentage points) is in contrast with the improvement observed in the West Bank (about 6 percentage points), resulting in an overall increase in food security at the national level of 3 percentage points. These divergent paths are due to the closure of tunnels with Egypt in 2013 and, in particular, to the hostilities that affected Gaza in mid-2014, that compounded the existing and long-standing difficulties caused by the blockade, leading to a severe contraction in Gazan GDP during 2014 (a 15 percent decline).

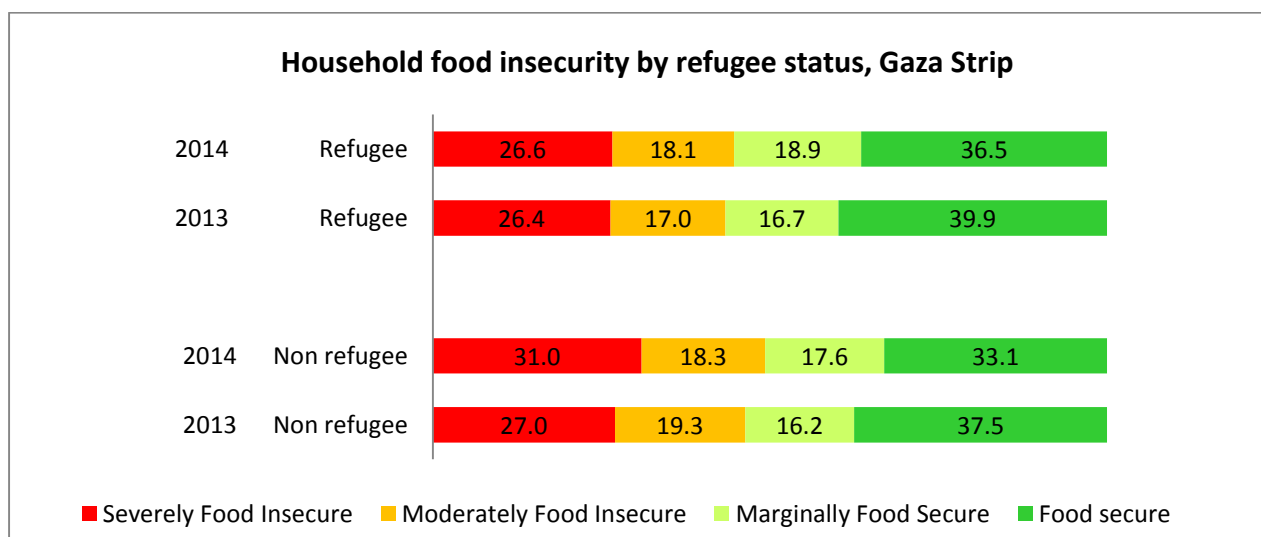
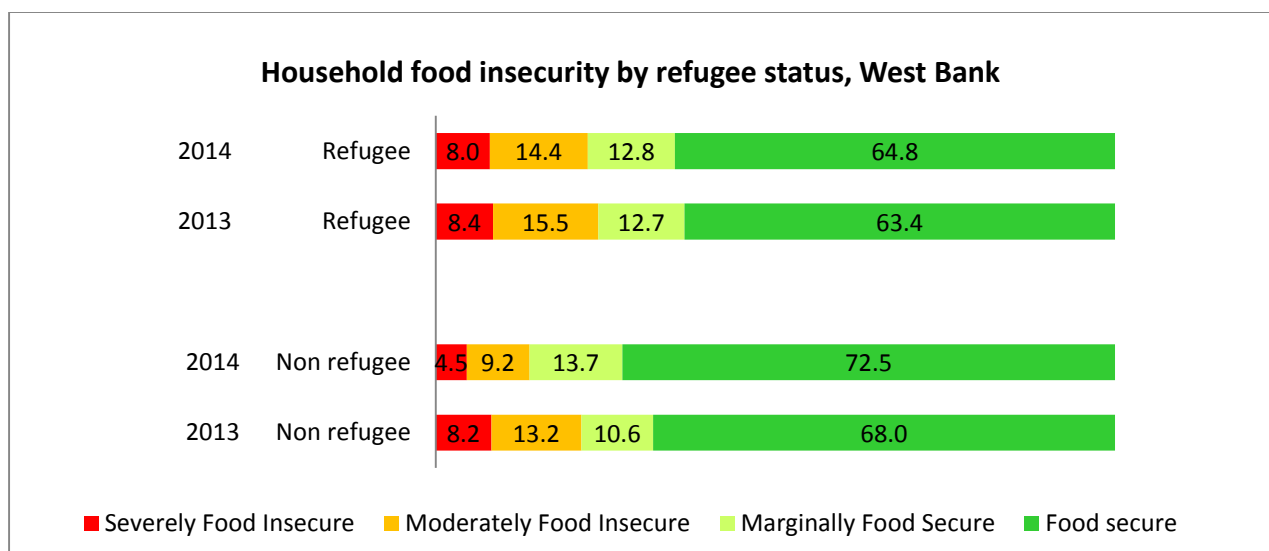


¹ The sample design includes households living in the areas denominated the West Bank (which includes also East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip.

² Percentage values in the text are rounded to the unit.

³ The four categories used to analyse food security in Palestine are “severely food insecure”, “moderately food insecure”, “marginally food secure” and “food secure”. For a short definition of each category, see Annex.

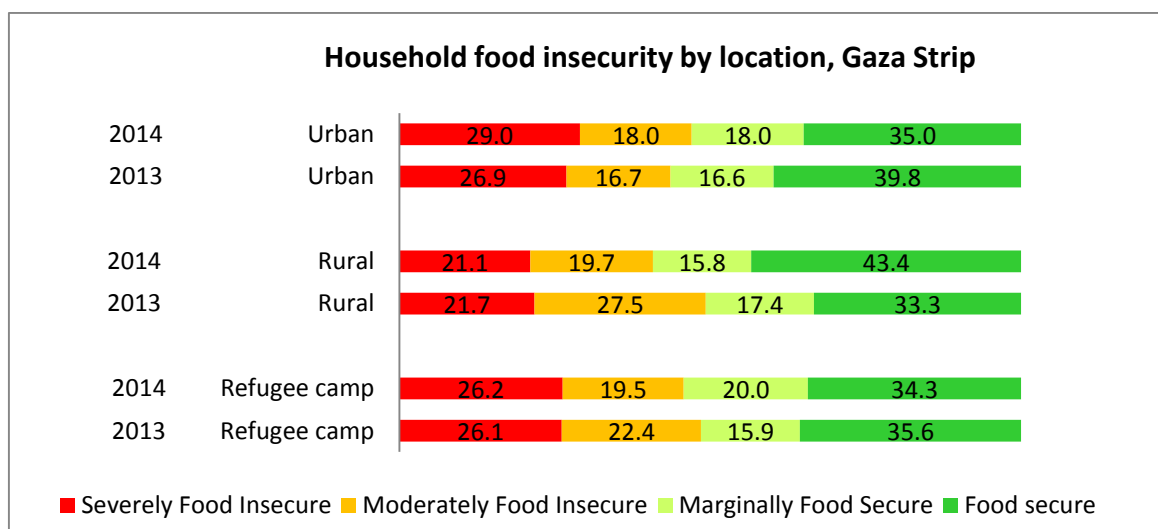
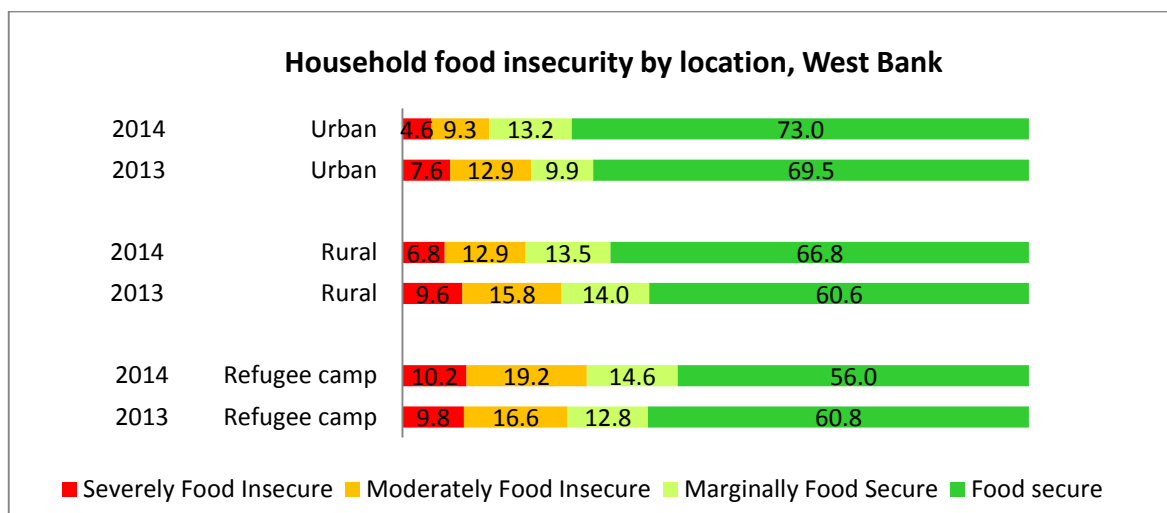
The different food insecurity dynamics in West Bank and Gaza are better understood by examining the breakdown of data between refugee and non-refugee households. In the West Bank, food insecurity levels are higher among refugees than among non-refugees (22 and 14 percent respectively in 2014). Food security level for refugee households reported an improvement of around 2 percentage points while the improvement in the incidence of food security among non-refugee households is more significant (8 percentage points). The gap between refugees' and non-refugees' access to food is widening and this is mostly driven by the consistently higher unemployment rate for refugees compared to non-refugees. Refugee households in Gaza show lower food insecurity levels than non-refugee households both in 2013 and 2014, despite facing comparable employment levels. Both refugee and non-refugee households experienced a worsening of food security status (about 1 and 3 percentage points respectively). This reflects a generalized food access decline in Gaza as a result of labour entitlement failure – the unemployment rate jumped to a record high of 44 percent in 2014, 11 percentage points higher than in 2013 – and a sharp increase in food price levels – food prices increased by 12 percent between May and August 2014 – and volatility due to the 2014 hostilities and the collapse of the economy.



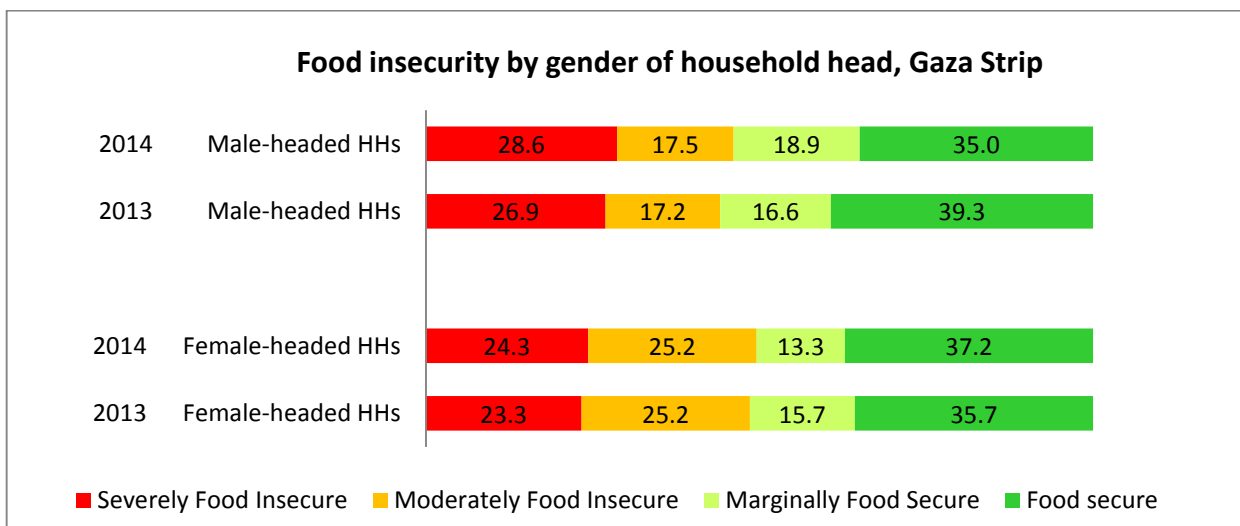
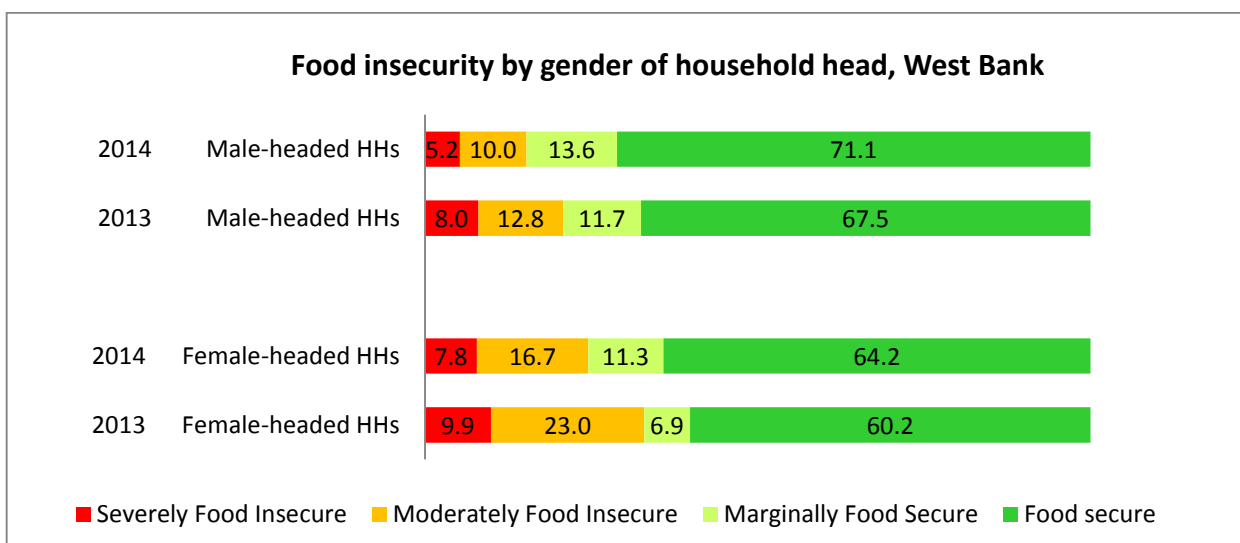
The negative impact of the protracted crisis situation on food access in Gaza is particularly severe for urban households among whom food insecurity increased by 3 percentage points. In the West Bank, the incidence of food insecurity among urban households improved by 7 percentage points.

Rural households, although still facing a high incidence of food insecurity (overall around 21 per cent), are the ones that improved most between 2013 and 2014 (about 6 percentage points), in both the West Bank and Gaza. This shows that, overall, rural households are relatively better equipped than other household typologies to respond to shocks such as the ones affecting Gaza in 2013 and 2014. The explanation is related to the possibility for agricultural households to compensate the reduction in labour opportunities (labour entitlement) and the reduced availability of food due to the closure of tunnels (trade entitlement) with direct production of foodstuffs (production entitlement) that can be either directly consumed or sold to take advantage of higher food prices.

In 2014, the percentage of food insecure households in refugee camps in Gaza and the West Bank is 46 and 29 percent, respectively. Food security has worsened in the West Bank (3 percentage points change), while in Gaza it has slightly improved (by 3 percentage points).



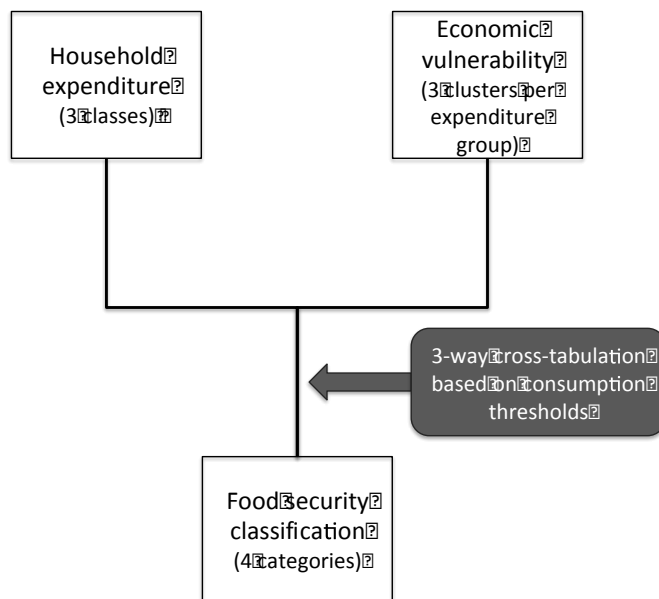
Gender also affects the incidence of food insecurity among Palestinian households. Almost one fourth of male-headed households are food insecure, compared to one third of female-headed households, a difference that is relatively stable across time. In Gaza, both female- and male-headed households are almost evenly split between food secure and insecure whilst in the West Bank only 15 per cent of male-headed households are food insecure, compared to 25 per cent of female-headed households. In terms of change over the years, the two areas have shown different evolutions, with Gaza showing stable values for female-headed households and a slight increase in the share of food insecure households that are male-headed (about 2 percentage points), while in the West Bank female-headed households lead the improvement in food security (8 percentage points) vis-à-vis male-headed households (6 percentage points).



Annex. Comparison between the old and new SEFSec methodologies

A. Old methodology

This methodology, originally developed in 2007 and reviewed and endorsed in 2009, combines income, consumption, and a set of seven vulnerability variables (household size, refugee status, assistance, expectations on financial resources, impact on total, food and non-food expenditures) to classify households across four categories: food insecure, vulnerable to food insecurity, marginally food secure and food secure.

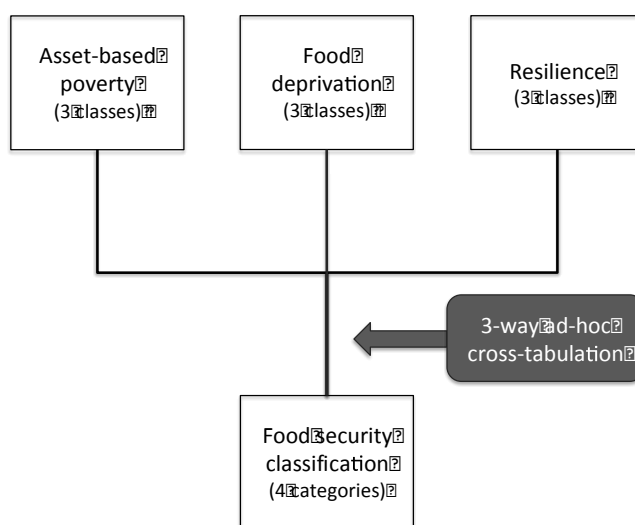


The resulting food security groups are defined as:

	Food insecure	Households with income and consumption below USD 5.65 per adult equivalent per day OR Households showing decrease in total food and non-food expenditures, including households unable to further decrease their expenditure patterns.
	Vulnerable	Households showing both income or consumption below USD 7.07 per adult equivalent per day EXCEPT house-holds showing no decrease in expenditure patterns.
	Marginally secure	Households showing either income or consumption above USD 7.07 per adult equivalent per day (not both) OR Households with both income and consumption between USD 5.65 and USD 7.07 per adult equivalent per day with no decrease in expenditure patterns.
	Food secure	Households with income and consumption above USD 7.07 per adult equivalent per day OR Households with income and consumption between USD 5.65 and USD 7.07 per adult equivalent per day and show no decrease in total food and non-food expenditures.

B. New methodology

The new SEFSec methodology, which was applied to the data of SEFSec 2013-2014 surveys, uses a three-pillar approach to reflect the multi-dimensional drivers of food insecurity in Palestine, including: poverty (based on household ownership of assets), food deprivation (Food Consumption Score (FCS) to capture dietary quality and the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) to capture food consumption quantity), and resilience (to capture household's capacity to adapt and transform in the face of shocks or stressors relying on assets, income generating activities, basic services, and social safety nets).



The resulting food security groups are defined as:

	Severely food insecure	Households with a severe or significant consumption gap that they cannot counter through economic means or coping mechanisms.
	Moderately food insecure	Households that face issues with either the quantity or quality of food consumed, which they cannot address due to their limited financial means or without employing irreversible coping options.
	Marginally food secure	Households that risk not being able to maintain sufficient food consumption, and households that have adequate financial means but did not adapt their diet to an acceptable level.
	Food secure	Households that have sufficient food consumption, which they will be able to maintain without the use of coping strategies while meeting their essential food and non-food needs.

Therefore the results obtained using the old methodology (i.e. the 2013 data published in the High Level Statement issued in June 2014) and those obtained using the new methodology (i.e. this report) are not comparable.