

CHAPTER 10: HOUSEHOLD SELF-ASSESSED FOOD SECURITY STATUS

10.1 Introduction

While household food security can be assessed quantitatively through food consumption and/or availability of food, as well as using indirect measures of income earning levels, such as expenditure terciles among others, measures of self assessed food security status reflects the different dimensions and characteristics of food security according to people's own perceptions. The UCS collected information on self-assessed food security status by asking households questions about each of the following questions on the:

- (i) Number of meals ideally eaten at that time of the year;
- (ii) Number of meals of meals per day typically eaten by the household in the past 30 days;
- (iii) Number of days in the past 30 days that the household skipped an entire main meal because the household did not have enough food or money to purchase more food;
- (iv) Number of days in the past 30 days that the household skipped an entire day without eating a main meal because the household did not have enough food or money to purchase more food;
- (v) Number of days in the past 30 days that the household ate a smaller than usual main meal because the household did not have enough food or money to purchase more food; and
- (vi) Number of days in the past 30 days that the household had to ask neighbors or relatives for food to make a meal.

From results gained through the above questions, two more aggregate food security indicators can be calculated:

1. A percent ratio of the actual, to the ideal, number of meals eaten. This gives an indication of the extent to which household spokespersons feel the household consumed something close or more distant to the ideal number of meals; and
2. A food security index, which is the sum of the number of days given in response to questions (iii) to (vi) above. The higher the index number the greater the number of times that the household experienced one or more occasions when family food security was under threat.

In addition, enumerators were asked to rank the food security of the household based on their own perception from the interview and their direct observations during the interview on a scale of 1 (least food secure) to 5 (most food secure). This measure of food security is purely subjective based on the perception of the enumerator, but can be used to triangulate information given households responses to other questions listed above.

10.2 Household self assessed food security status

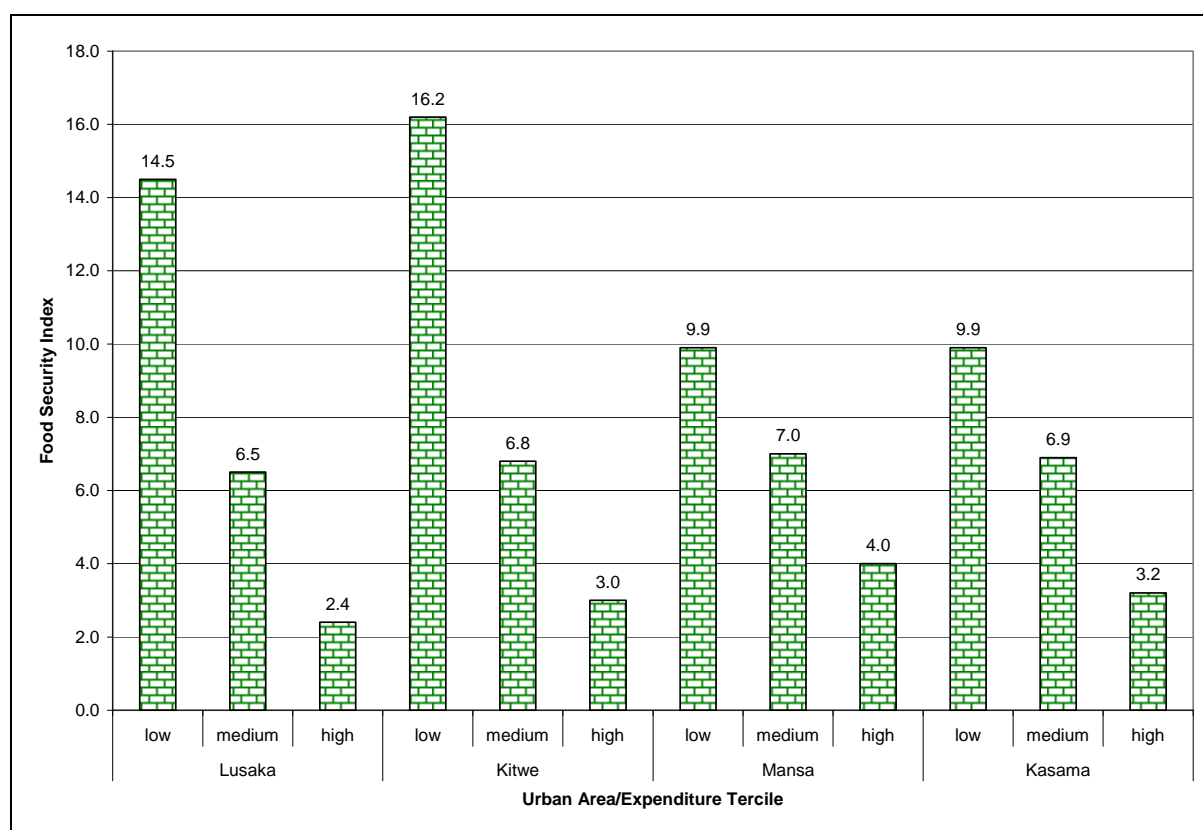
Table 75 shows the households' qualitative views about selected measures of their own food security per household adult equivalent expenditure terciles and by location.

- The average level of self-security achievement stood at 88-90% in terms of households' food consumption measured by the actual as a percent of the ideal number of meals eaten

per day in Lusaka, Kitwe and Kasama, with Mansa being the lowest at 82%. The perceived level of self-security was generally highest in high expenditure terciles, followed by medium and lowest in the low expenditure terciles in all sample urban areas. The declared ideal number of meals households would consume is more or less the same for all expenditure terciles in all the sample urban areas.

- The average number of days in the past 30 days a meal was skipped was lowest in Lusaka (1.4 compared to 2.1-2.4). Skipped meals were higher among households falling into the lower expenditure terciles.
- The score for all the other food security parameters was more favorable to households in the high rather than lower expenditure terciles (see Figure 15). The lower the expenditure tercile, the greater the number of days that a household employed any particular coping strategy. In addition, the enumerators' qualitative assessments of the household security status at the end of the interview tended to be higher, the higher the expenditure tercile of households interviewed.

Figure 15. Food security index per expenditure tercile and by location



10.3 Summary

Households' ability to consume the ideal number of main meals a day in the sample urban areas was about 90% except in Mansa where it was 82%. This measure, including other household food security indicators, was more favorable for households in the high followed by that in the medium and low expenditure terciles in all areas. The other household food security indicators were:

- Number of meals ideally eaten at that time of the year;

- Number of meals of meals per day typically eaten by the household in the past 30 days;
- Number of days in the past 30 days that the household skipped an entire main meal because the household did not have enough food or money to purchase more food;
- Number of days in the past 30 days that the household skipped an entire day without eating a main meal because the household did not have enough food or money to purchase more food;
- Number of days in the past 30 days that the household ate a smaller than usual main meal because the household did not have enough food or money to purchase more food; and
- Number of days in the past 30 days that the household had to ask neighbors or relatives for food to make a meal.

Table 75. Household qualitative views about selected measures of their own food security by household per adult equivalent food expenditure tercile and by location

Food security Status Indicator	Lusaka				Kitwe				Mansa				Kasama			
	Overall	low	medium	high	Overall	low	medium	high	Overall	low	medium	high	Overall	low	medium	high
 Number of Meals Desired and Attained Per Day in Past 30 days															
Ideal number of main meals	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.2
In past 30 days number of main meals typically eaten per day	2.8	2.6	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.4	2.7	2.9	2.7	2.4	2.7	3.0	2.7	2.5	2.7	3.0
Achievement Levels % Actual / Ideal Number of Meals per day															
Percent Actual/ideal meals	90.3	81.3	90.6	93.5	84.4	77.4	84.4	90.6	81.8	77.4	81.8	88.2	87.7	83.3	87.1	93.8
Number of Days in Past 30 That Something OccurredNumber of Days in Past 30 that Something Occurred															
Number of days in past 30 days a main meal was skipped	1.4	2.5	1.3	.5	2.4	4.6	1.9	.8	2.4	3.4	2.4	1.3	2.1	3.0	2.1	1.1
Number of days in past 30 days without a main meal during the entire day	.2	.5	.1	.1	.5	.9	.4	.1	.2	.4	.3	.0	.3	.5	.5	.0
Number of days in past 30 days the main meal was smaller than usual	2.0	3.9	1.7	.6	1.9	3.4	1.7	.7	1.8	2.6	1.7	1.1	1.6	2.5	1.6	.8
Number of days in past 30 days the household worried about where food would come from	3.2	5.9	2.6	.9	2.9	5.7	2.1	1.1	1.9	2.5	2.0	1.3	2.0	3.0	2.1	1.0
Number of days in past 30 days asked neighbors or relatives for food to make a meal	.9	1.7	.8	.3	.9	1.	.7	.3	.6	1.0	.6	.3	.6	.9	.6	.3
Total Food Security Index	7.7	14.5	6.5	2.4	8.6	16.2	6.8	3.0	6.9	9.9	7.0	4.0	6.6	9.9	6.9	3.2
Enumerator qualitative rank of household food security status (1-5)	3.4	2.7	3.4	4.1	3.5	2.7	3.6	4.2	3.5	2.8	3.6	4.0	3.5	3.0	3.4	4.2

Source: CSO/MACO/FSRP Urban Consumption Survey, 2007-2008