

Aligning National Food Safety Policy to Enhance Food Security

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Outline

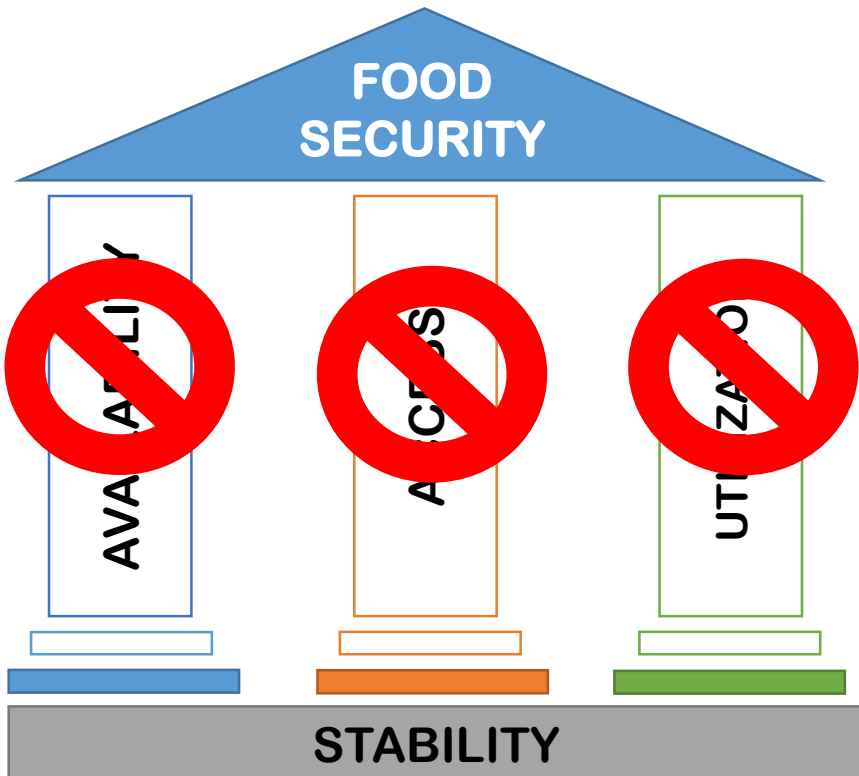
- Introduction
- Ghana as a case study
- Food Safety/Nutrition Issues
- National Food Safety Policy
- Policy Recommendations
- Conclusion



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Introduction: Food Security

- Food Safety and Nutrition are critical components of Food Security
- Food security pillars:



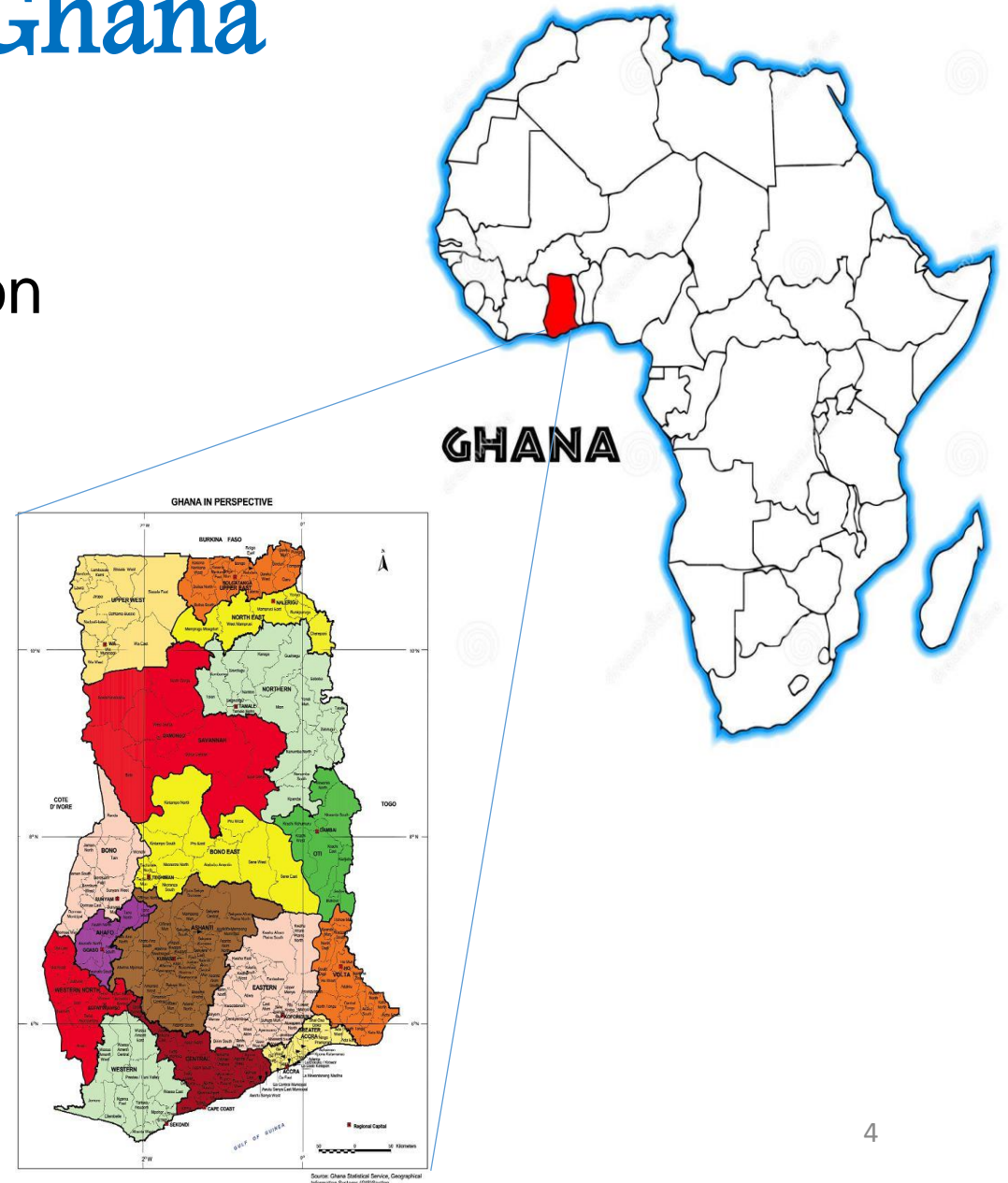
"Food security occurs when all people, all of the time, have physical, social and economic access to **sufficient**, **safe** and **nutritious** food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life"

Source: FAO World Food Summit, 1996.



Food security situation in Ghana

- Ghana is a lower-middle income country in West Africa
- High economic growth and transformation
- Achieved substantial improvements in food security
 - Reduced poverty and extreme poverty
 - Reduced chronic and acute child undernutrition
- Yet 1.2M Ghanaians are food insecure, another 2M vulnerable to food insecurity
- Micronutrient malnutrition is prevalent
- Large discrepancies between rural and urban populations



Practices threatening Ghana's food supply

- Illegal small-scale mining operations that have destroyed arable lands and poisoned water bodies with mercury.
- Hygiene and sanitation challenges in the informal food sector resulting in microbiological contaminants in food.
- Emerging and banned adulterants used in food processing (DDT in fermented fish, Sudan Red dye in palm oil, parathion in imported vegetables) and processing toxicants (lead, Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons).
- Accumulation of mycotoxins (Aflatoxins, fumonisins and ochratoxins) due to poor harvesting, drying and storage systems (Aflatoxins in maize, peanuts, tigernuts and dry smoked herrings).



The case of Ghana's Diet Transition

Energy & Nutrient lacking diet

Malnutrition:

1. Micronutrient Deficiency (E.g. Anemia, Vit A, Iodine)
2. Undernutrition

Not enough protein and micronutrient consumption among children

Over-nutrition

Rise in Non-Communicable diseases

Better access to staple foods

Diversified diets with nutrition dense foods (e.g. Soya and peanuts in complementary foods)

Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables in urban populations

Highly processed foods
Increased demand for Ready-To-Eat foods

High calorie diet

Increased Street Vended Foods

Hygiene, Sanitation and Energy problems

Mycotoxins

Adulterants

Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons in smoked fish

Consumer confusion on how to make decisions based on intangible hazards

Food Safety hazards

National Food Safety Policy ~ Ghana

DRAFT – 31/05/2013

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NATIONAL FOOD SAFETY POLICY

GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

- Provides policy direction and guidance along the food value chain to address food safety issues by:
 1. Enhancing coordination among food safety agencies.
 2. Improve compliance to international food safety standards.
 3. Increase human technical capacity for food-borne disease surveillance, laboratory testing, regulatory enforcement.
 4. Using evidence based interventions for sustainable improvements.
 5. Demystifying food safety and enhance consumer/public education.

Gaps and Recommendations for aligning National Food Safety Policy

- The National Food Safety Policy is not aligned with the national nutrition policy and other Government policies that have implications on food safety.
 - 1. Need for policy coherence with the nutrition policy and synergies with related national policies to promote a healthy food environment**
 - 2. Align with other government policies such as “Planting for food and jobs”, 1 District, 1 Factory”.**
 - 3. Development of safe food technologies that enhances availability and access to food (Food Safety by design)**

Gaps and Recommendations for National Food Safety Policy

- The policy is silent on the impact of sanitation, water availability and safety, and availability and access to energy resources to enhance food safety as a component of food security.
 1. **There needs to be strong linkages with addressing the golden trio (Water/Sanitation/Energy Gaps)**
- Lack of strategies to enhance self regulation of the local food industry
 1. **The policy should highlight strategies for a consumer driven self-regulating formal and informal food industry.**
 2. **The policy needs to consider consumer and stakeholder behavior in strategizing food safety literacy.**
 3. **The policy needs clear strategy on risk analysis approach to food safety. E.g. Establish a Food Safety task force for Risk assessment/communication.**

Conclusions

- Predominant food safety hazards in Ghana are Microbiological (*Salmonella*, *E.coli*, *Shigella*, *C. perfringens*) and chemical (Pesticide residue, heavy metals, mycotoxins, adulterants).
- Ghana's diet transition presents emerging public health threats from over and undernutrition and food safety hazards.
- Significant food safety gaps exist in Ghana's food supply that can be addressed with active implementation of the National Food Safety Policy.
- The national food safety policy document (2012) requires a review to address food safety holistically through a food security lens and explore synergies with nutrition and related national policies.

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