

## **Frequently Asked Questions – IC Division-**

### **1. Global Hunger Index(GHI)**

#### **What is Global Hunger Index & Position of India in the Index?**

The Global Hunger Index(GHI) is an Index which ranks countries on a 100-point scale in which zero is the best score (no hunger) and 100 the worst. The GHI report is brought out annually by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). As per the latest IFPRI's GHI report brought out in October, 2014 India ranked 55 out of 120 countries with a score of 17.8 while India ranked 63 out of 120 countries with a score of 21.3 as per 2013 GHI report.

#### **How GHI is calculated?**

GHI is calculated combining three equally weighted indicators i.e. 1. **Undernourishment**: the proportion of undernourished people as a percentage of the population (reflecting the share of the population with insufficient caloric intake); 2. **Child underweight**: the proportion of children younger than age five who are underweight (that is, have low weight for their age, reflecting wasting, stunted growth, or both), which is one indicator of child undernutrition 3. **Child mortality**: the mortality rate of children younger than age five (partially reflecting the fatal synergy of inadequate caloric intake and unhealthy environments).

#### **What is Government's view on GHI ?**

The GHI is only indicative of undernourishment and not hunger per se and that also based largely on data of children under the age of five. The Index does not reflect the number of hungry or lack of availability of food or access to food to the people in the society. So it is not a proper index for reflecting the situation of hunger level in the country and cannot even be used to compare the same with the rest of the countries.

#### **What is the features of GHI?**

The 2014 GHI report mentions that GHI is based on data of different years for its three components indicators. While data for proportion of under-nourished is as per the years 2011–2013 (FAO 2014), data on child mortality are for 2012 and data on child underweight are for the latest year for which data are available in the period 2009–2013. The report however, indicates that India's latest GHI score is based partly on outdated data: although it includes relatively recent child mortality from 2012 and any recent progress in the fight against child undernutrition has not be taken into account by the 2014 GHI.

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Furthermore, the findings in the study are neither test checked nor validated by any large scale primary field surveys in the country. Shortcomings or limitations of the GHI has however, been communicated to the IFPRI in a meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2011 where they made a presentation on the report to all concerned departments presided over by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation at Krishi Bhavan. However, looking at the data set available in the report, percentage of population in 3 indicators has consistently coming down from 1990 to 2014.

**What are the steps taken by Government to improve situation of Hunger?**

As regards steps taken to ensure food security in the country, the Government of India has accorded high priority to the issue of hunger and malnutrition in the country and is implementing several schemes/programmes of different Ministries/Departments through State Governments/UT Administrations to improve food security situation in the country. The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) has been one of the major initiatives of Government of India in its efforts to provide food security to millions of poor in the country. Procurement of food grains through the Minimum Support Price operations in the Central Pool by the Government for meeting the requirements of the Public Distribution System (PDS) also ensures payment of assured remunerative prices to the farmers thereby incentivizing enhanced production and productivity. Thus, the PDS assures both remunerative prices to the farmers and availability of food grains to the vulnerable population at affordable prices.

To further strengthen these efforts, Government has enacted the National Food Security Act, 2013 with the objective to provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity. The Act has provides for coverage of upto 75% of the rural and 50% of the urban population to receive highly subsidized foodgrains under TPDS. Under this Act, two-thirds of the total population of the country or approximately 81 crore persons are estimated to receive benefits under TPDS. The Act also contains provisions for nutritional support to Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers or children below 14 years of age.

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## **2. SAARC Food Bank**

### **What is SAARC Food Bank and India's contribution to it?**

In pursuance to 14<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit held in New Delhi during 3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> April, 2007, an agreement among SAARC member countries on Establishing the **SAARC Food Bank** has been ratified by the President of India on 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2007 with the following objectives:-

- a. to act as a regional food security reserve for the SAARC Member Countries during normal time food shortages and emergencies; and
- b. to provide regional support to national food security efforts; foster inter-country partnerships and regional integration, and solve regional food shortages through collective action.

As per Agreement, India's assessed share of the foodgrains for the reserve of the SAARC Food Bank initially was 1,53,200 MTs out of the total reserve of 2,43,000 MTs which has since been revised to make it doubled and accordingly India's assessed share of foodgrains now is 3,06,400 MTs out of total share of 4,86,000 MTs.

### **How India's share of foodgrains are reserved?**

India's assessed share of foodgrains has been kept as reserve in different strategic locations in the country in the designated Food Corporation of India (FCI) Godowns to facilitate movement of foodgrains in case of necessity.

### **Whether the Government proposes to reconsider its commitment to the said Food Bank in view of the drought and shortage of foodgrains in the country?**

Because Bank has been set up for such eventualities only, no reconsideration of its commitment is proposed.

### **What are the salient features of SAARC Food Bank ?**

The salient features of the agreement on the SAARC Food Bank are given below:-

- The Food Bank shall have a reserve of foodgrains consisting of either wheat or rice, or a combination of both. The reserve shall be the property of the country maintaining it and shall be in addition to the national reserve maintained by it.
- The assessed share of foodgrains for the Reserve of each member state is annexed. Out of a total reserve of 2,43,000 MTs, India's assessed shares of Foodgrains for the Reserve of SAARC Food Bank is 1,53,200 MTs. In pursuant to decisions taken in the Fourth SAARC Food Bank Board meeting held in Dhaka, Bangladesh during 27<sup>th</sup> -28<sup>th</sup> October, 2010, the assessed

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shares of foodgrains in the SAARC Food Bank has since been revised to double of the aforesaid quantity and accordingly India's assessed share has been raised to 3,06,400 MTs out of total share of 4,86,000 MTs.

- Considering the large size of the country and operational feasibility, the stock of foodgrains for the Bank would be kept in different strategic locations in the country in the designated Food Corporation of India (FCI) Godowns to facilitate movement of foodgrains in case of necessity.
- The foodgrains reserves of India in the SAARC Food Bank are from the stock of foodgrains procured under Central Pool.
- The Member Country in need may directly request another Member Country in case of a food emergency or shortage for release of foodgrains. Each country shall be entitled to withdraw foodgrains from its own reserves to meet emergencies and shortages.
- A food emergency shall mean a state or condition in which a Member Country, having suffered a severe and unexpected natural or man-made calamity, is unable to cope with such a state or condition by using its national reserve.
- A food shortage shall mean a state or condition in which a Member Country has suffered a production shortfall and/or storage shortfall, and finds it difficult to cope with such a state or condition by using its national reserve.
- Each SAARC Country would be a member of the Board which would administer the functioning of the SAARC Food Bank.
- Specifications of foodgrains have been so finalized that every country of the region can contribute to the SAARC Food Bank from its national reserves.
- The prices and terms of payment for foodgrains will be mutually decided by countries giving and taking the foodgrains. Humanitarian aspects would be factored into the price only in case of emergencies.

**When did the SAARC Food Bank Operationalised?**

The Sixth meeting of SAARC Food Bank Board recommended that 7 January, 2013 may be deemed as the date of entry into force of the SAARC Food Bank Agreement.

None of the member countries have so far drawn any foodgrains from SAARC Food Bank.

**How many meetings are so far held by SAARC Food Bank Board:**

Since signing of the Agreement, the Food Bank Board has held Seven meetings including a special(5<sup>th</sup>) session. While Joint Secretary(IC) in the Department of Food & P.D. has been designated as Member, SAARC Food Bank Board from India, Joint Secretary in the SAARC Division of the Ministry of External Affairs has been designated as Nodal point for the matter of SAARC Food Bank.

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India hosted the 7<sup>th</sup> SAARC Food Bank Board (SFB) on 10-11, November, 2014 in New Delhi, India. All SAARC Member States except Afghanistan have attended the meeting. Besides, officers from SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu and SAARC Agriculture Centre, Dhaka also attended the meeting. The meeting commenced with the handing over of the Chairmanship from representative of SAARC Food Bank Board from Bhutan to Member of SAARC Food Bank Board, India Shri Ajai Saxena, Joint Secretary, Department of Food & P.D.

**What is SAARC Foodgrain Testing Laboratory & where is it?**

In the Sixth SAARC Food Bank Board meeting held at Thimphu, Bhutan in November, 2013, it was proposed that the existing laboratory facilities available in India to be designated as SAARC Foodgrain Testing Laboratory to start with. The Board considered and agreed the proposal to designate the Central Grain Analysis Laboratory (CGAL), New Delhi as the regional reference laboratory for SAARC Food Bank. Besides, Board also agreed to the proposal of India for providing training in foodgrain storage management at the Indian Grain Storage Management and Research Institute(IGMRI), Hapur. The first batch of Training of SAARC officials in foodgrains storage at IGMRI, Hapur has since been held from 17-26, November, 2014. Nomination have been received for participating in the training programme from 5 member countries viz. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

**What are the shares of each SAARC Member countries in SAARC Food Bank:-**

Presently proportionate food grain reserve to be maintained in the Member States stands as follows:

SI No.	Country	Assessed Reserve	
		As per the decision of the 1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting in Colombo in 2008	As per the decision of the 3rd Meeting in Kabul, 2009
1.	Afghanistan	1,420	2,840
2.	Bangladesh	40,000	80,000
3.	Bhutan	180	360
4.	India	1,53,200	3,06,400
5.	Maldives	200	400
6.	Nepal	4,000	8,000
7.	Pakistan	40,000	80,000
8.	Sri Lanka	4,000	8,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,43,000</b>	<b>4,86,000</b>