**Glossary of selected technical terms**

**Body Mass Index (BMI):** The ratio of weight for height measured as the weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in metres.

**Food access:** Economic, physical and social access to food is one of the four components of food security.

**Food availability:** Physical food availability addresses the “supply side” of food security and is determined by the level of food production, stock levels and net trade. It is one of the four components of food security.  
  
**Food insecurity:** A situation that exists where people lack secure access for sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development, and an active and healthy life.

**Food safety:** Food safety refers to the conditions and practices that preserve the quality of food to prevent contamination and food-borne illnesses.

**Food utilisation:** the way the body makes the most of various nutrients in the food; the term can also incorporate how the food is stored, processed and prepared for eating, and health and sanitation as they relate to nutrition.

**Food security:** Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

**Food sovereignty:** Food sovereignty is defined as the right of peoples and sovereign states to democratically determine their own agricultural and food policies (IAASTD definition – see Chapter 6.8 in the companion book).

**Hunger:** The condition of having insufficient to eat to meet energy requirements. Hunger can lead to undernutrition, but absence of hunger does not imply absence of undernutrition. In this book, the term is largely synonymous with chronic undernourishment.

**Malnutrition:** An abnormal physiological condition caused by inadequate, unbalanced or excessive consumption of food; the blanket term includes undernutrition and overnutrition, as well as micronutrient deficiencies.  
  
**Micronutrients:** vitamins, minerals and certain other substances regularly required by the body in very small amounts. Deficiency of one or more of this form of malnutrition may not be visibly apparent in an individual, but it increases morbidity and mortality, and also has negative impacts on other aspects of health, cognitive development and economic development.

**Nutrition security:** A situation that exists when secure access to an appropriately nutritious diet is coupled with a sanitary environment, adequate health services and care, in order to secure a healthy and active life for all household members. Nutrition security differs from the term food security in that it also considers the aspects of adequate caring practices, health and hygiene in addition to dietary adequacy.  
  
**Overweight and obesity:** Body weight that is above normal for height as a result of an excessive accumulation of fat, being a manifestation of overnourishment. Overweight is defined as a BMI of more than 25 but less than 30, and obesity as having a BMI of 30 or more.

**Poverty:** the state of being extremely poor, lacking the means for basic existence. It usually refers to a monetary condition, but can also refer to other basic needs (food, shelter and clothing) not being met.

**Resilience:** the ability of an individual, household, community, country or region to successfully withstand, adapt to, and quickly recover from, stresses and shocks.

**Stunting:** low height for age, reflecting historic sustained undernutrition  
  
**Undernourishment:** A state, lasting for at least one year, of inability to acquire enough food, often defined as a level of food intake insufficient to meet dietary energy requirements.   
  
**Undernutrition:** The outcome of undernourishment, and/or poor absorption and/or poor biological use of nutrients consumed as a result of repeated infectious disease. It includes being underweight for one’s age, too short for one’s age (stunted), dangerously thin for one’s height (wasted) and deficient in vitamins and minerals (micronutrient undernutrition).  
  
**Underweight:** low weight for age in children, and a BMI of less than 18.5 in adults, reflecting a current condition resulting from inadequate food intake, past episodes of undernutrition or poor health conditions. Underweight reflects both stunting and wasting.  
  
**Wasting:** Low weight for height, generally the result of weight loss associated with a recent period of starvation or disease. Synonymous with ‘acute undernutrition’. ‘Wasting’ is often used to assess the severity of an emergency, and is strongly related to mortality.