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منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

# COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

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**UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF ACTION ON NUTRITION 2016-2025:  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE TO  
CONTRIBUTE TO HEALTHY DIETS AND IMPROVED NUTRITION**

## Executive Summary

In April 2016 the UN General Assembly proclaimed the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), providing a clearly defined, time-bound cohesive framework to implement the commitments made at the Second International Conference on Nutrition, along with the Sustainable Development Goals. The UN General Assembly mandated FAO and WHO to co-lead the implementation of the Decade, in collaboration with WFP, IFAD and UNICEF and other relevant stakeholders. The Work Programme of the Decade calls upon Member States to submit country-specific commitments for action and to convene action networks to accelerate progress on specific topics under the Decade's Action Areas. Norway is the first country that committed to establish a fisheries-related global Action Network under the umbrella of the Decade. Sustainable food from the ocean and inland waters can play a critical role in global food security and nutrition, by contributing to the livelihoods, well-being, incomes and sources of affordable, nutritious foods for many people.

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## I. BACKGROUND TO THE DECADE OF ACTION ON NUTRITION

1. On 1 April 2016, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted resolution 70/259<sup>1</sup> through which it proclaimed 2016-2025 the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (“Decade”<sup>2</sup>).
2. The proclamation of the Decade was recommended at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) co-hosted in November 2014 by FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO), which adopted the Rome Declaration on Nutrition<sup>3</sup>, laying down ten broad policy commitments, and its companion Framework for Action, setting out 60 recommended actions<sup>4</sup>.
3. The UN General Assembly acknowledged in 2015 the ICN2 commitments by including in the 2030 Agenda a specific Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) to “end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture” (SDG 2), as well as embedding nutrition-related concerns in the other SDGs.
4. In resolution 70/259 proclaiming the Decade, the UN General Assembly mandated FAO and WHO to: (i) co-lead the implementation of the Decade, in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF); (ii) cooperatively develop a work programme for the Decade, using coordination mechanisms such as the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), in consultation with other international and regional organizations and platforms; and (iii) produce biennial reports for use by the UN Secretary-General to inform the UN General Assembly about the Decade’s implementation.
5. The Work Programme of the Decade<sup>5</sup> was drawn up in keeping with the guidance given by the UN General Assembly in resolution 70/259, through an inclusive and collaborative process, which included four face-to-face discussions with Members. The Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) and the Private Sector Mechanism (PSM) for relations with CFS actively participated in two online consultations.
6. The Decade provides all stakeholders with a unique time-bound opportunity, within existing structures and available resources, to strengthen joint efforts to implement the ICN2 commitments and the nutrition-related SDGs.
7. The first progress report on the Decade was released<sup>6</sup> and will be conveyed by the UN Secretary-General to the UN General Assembly during its current 72<sup>nd</sup> session.

## II. MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECADE OF ACTION ON NUTRITION

8. The Work Programme of the Decade embraces six inter-connected and cross-cutting thematic action areas, based on the ICN2 recommendations and in line with the SDGs, namely:
  - a) Sustainable, resilient food systems for healthy diets;
  - b) Aligned health systems providing universal coverage of essential nutrition actions;
  - c) Social protection and nutrition education;
  - d) Trade and investment for improved nutrition;
  - e) Safe and supportive environments for nutrition at all ages;

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<sup>1</sup> A/RES/70/259 - [https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/259](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/259).

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/nutrition/home>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ml542e.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mm215e.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bs726e.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> <http://undocs.org/A/72/829>.

- f) Strengthened governance and accountability for nutrition.
9. The means of implementation of the Decade through its Work Programme include:
- a) the submission by Member States, to FAO and WHO, of their ICN2 specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) commitments for action, in the context of national nutrition and nutrition-related policies, set out in dialogue with a wide range of relevant stakeholders;
  - b) the convening of action networks, i.e. informal coalitions of countries that focus on a specific nutrition-related action area and aim to strengthen collaboration on nutrition action;
  - c) the convening of fora for planning, sharing knowledge, recognizing successes, voicing challenges and promoting collaboration among relevant stakeholders;
  - d) the mobilization of financial resources to support implementation of national policies and programmes.
10. During the 70th World Health Assembly (WHA) in May 2017, Brazil and Ecuador became the first two countries that made ambitious, concrete commitments for action as part of the Decade.<sup>7</sup>
11. In November 2017, commitments made in connection with the Decade at the Global Nutrition Summit held in Milan, Italy, included domestic funding by countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, India, Madagascar, the Niger, Nigeria and Zambia, among others.<sup>8</sup>
12. Norway announced, at the Ocean Conference in June 2017, the establishment of a *Global Action Network on Sustainable Food from the Oceans and Inland Waters for Food Security and Nutrition*<sup>9</sup>, under the umbrella of the Decade and as a direct follow-up to the SDGs (see further Section IV paragraphs 21–24).
13. Two additional regional networks were announced at the Global Conference on Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) held in Montevideo, Uruguay, in October 2017<sup>10</sup>: the *Action Network for the Americas on Healthy Food Environments*, led by Chile, and the *Action Network for Ending Childhood Obesity in the Pacific*, hosted by Fiji.
14. In December 2016, FAO and WHO co-hosted in Rome, under the umbrella of the Decade, the *International Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition*.<sup>11</sup> Its focus was on supply-side and demand-side policies and measures for increasing access to healthy diets, empowering consumers to choose healthy diets and measures to strengthen accountability, resilience and equity within the food system. Several sessions addressed the fisheries and aquaculture sector, for example by sharing country experiences on the promotion of fish consumption, processing and marketing of fish, and considering fisheries as a key economic activity.
15. In addition, five follow-up Regional Symposia<sup>12</sup> took stock of the regional dimensions and challenges of sustainable food systems for healthy diets and improved nutrition; shared key features of food systems in the respective regions, and how these influence dietary patterns; identified regional policy processes and experiences for tackling nutrition through a food systems approach; and triggered

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<sup>7</sup> <https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/en/commitments/summary>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://nutritionforgrowth.org/press-release-global-nutrition-summit-2017-milan/>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://nettsteder.regjeringen.no/foodfromtheocean/action-network/>.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.who.int/conferences/global-ncd-conference/montevideo-report.pdf?ua=1>.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/sustainable-food-systems-nutrition-symposium/en/>;  
<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/I9025EN>.

<sup>12</sup> For Latin America and the Caribbean (San Salvador, 5-7 September 2017), for Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok 10-11 November 2017), for Africa (Abidjan, 16-17 November 2017), for Europe and Central Asia (Budapest, 4-5 December 2017) and for the Near East and North Africa (Muscat, 11-12 December 2017); <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/sustainable-food-systems-nutrition-symposium/regional-symposia/en/>.

the development of policy actions in line with the ICN2 Framework for Action and the Decade's Work Programme.

### III. CONTRIBUTION OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE TO HEALTHY DIETS

16. Poor dietary habits are the second-leading risk factor for global deaths and global disease burden.<sup>13</sup> The 2017 Global Nutrition Report shows that 88% of countries face a serious burden from two or more forms of malnutrition. Thus, the world is off track to reach the global targets on nutrition. In many of today's food systems, nutritious foods that constitute a healthy diet are not available or affordable for many people.

17. However, prioritized and accelerated action-oriented efforts within the Decade can lead the world towards meeting the ICN2 commitments, the 2025 WHA global nutrition targets<sup>14</sup>, the global diet-related NCD targets<sup>15</sup>, and the nutrition-relevant targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

18. At ICN2, Member States committed in the Rome Declaration on Nutrition to "enhance sustainable food systems by developing coherent public policies from production to consumption and across relevant sectors to provide year-round access to food that meets people's nutrition needs and promote safe and diversified healthy diets".<sup>16</sup>

19. Overall, both the International Symposium and the five Regional Symposia helped to raise awareness, build consensus and illustrate practical examples for using a food systems approach, including through the fisheries and aquaculture sector, to improve nutrition. For example:

- a) during the Regional Symposium for Latin America and the Caribbean, Peru showcased the promotion of sustainable fish consumption in schools;<sup>17</sup>
- b) during the Regional Symposium for Asia and the Pacific, WorldFish gave a presentation on "Sustaining healthy diets: the role of captured fisheries and aquaculture for improving nutrition in the post- 2015 era", emphasizing the important contribution of the fisheries sector to the livelihoods, well-being, incomes and sources of affordable, nutritious foods for many people;<sup>18</sup>
- c) during the Regional Symposium for Europe and Central Asia, Norway and Portugal shared their good practices on sustainable food from the ocean.<sup>19</sup>

20. If supported and developed in an environmentally and socially responsible manner, fisheries can play a critical role in addressing all forms of malnutrition. Fish provides a unique source of high-quality proteins, essential vitamins and minerals. The fisheries and aquaculture sector is an important provider of income and livelihoods for many communities.<sup>20</sup> Food from the ocean can potentially have the largest impact against micronutrient deficiencies.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Global, regional, and national comparative risk assessment of 84 behavioural, environmental and occupational, and metabolic risks or clusters of risks, 1990-2016: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2016. [https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736\(17\)32366-8.pdf](https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(17)32366-8.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.who.int/nutrition/global-target-2025/en/>.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.who.int/nmh/ncd-tools/definition-targets/en/>.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ml542e.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.slideshare.net/ExternalEvents/pesca-educa-promoviendo-el-consumo-responsable-de-pescado-en-las-escuelas-per/1>.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bt729e.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/reu/europe/documents/events2017/FNsymp/Programme\\_en.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/reu/europe/documents/events2017/FNsymp/Programme_en.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5555e.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3844e.pdf>.

#### **IV. GLOBAL ACTION NETWORK ON SUSTAINABLE FOOD FROM THE OCEANS AND INLAND WATERS FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION**

21. Aquatic food is not always included in discussions on food and nutrition policies. In addition, national policies on fisheries and aquaculture often focus on their biological sustainability and economic efficiency rather than on their role in ensuring food security and optimal nutrition. Therefore, Norway decided to establish and lead the *Global Action Network on Sustainable Food from the Oceans and Inland Waters for Food Security and Nutrition*,<sup>22</sup> with the aim of increasing the nutritional impacts the fisheries and aquaculture sector can make, as windows of opportunity, for ICN2 follow-up towards achieving healthy diets in the context of the Decade.<sup>23</sup>

22. This Action Network will provide a platform for countries to highlight the critical role food from the oceans and inland waters can play in ensuring food security and nutrition, raise political interest, share knowledge and good practices, illustrate successes and challenges, and work to increase the production and consumption of sustainable, safe and nutritious aquatic food, with the final objective of improving food systems, diets and nutrition for all through policy changes.

23. There is no limit to the number of countries that can join the Action Network. Members of the Action Network represent ministries or other national public institutions covering nutrition-related areas of work. Membership is open to more than one ministry or public institution from each participating country to guarantee the multisectoral engagement necessary to integrate and sustain action. In becoming members, countries commit to participate actively in Action Network activities, including by suggesting points of action and supporting implementation.

24. The first official meeting of this Action Network is scheduled to take place on Thursday 5 July 2018 in Rome. Countries wishing to join the Action Network and attend its first meeting may contact the Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> <http://nettsteder.regjeringen.no/foodfromtheocean/action-network/>.

<sup>23</sup> There has been a proliferation of activities on food security and nutrition issues related to fisheries and aquaculture. They include the setting up of networks, projects and umbrella projects in both FI and ES departments. It has therefore been decided that in order to maximize synergies and cooperation and minimize duplication and potential overlaps those initiatives will be supervised jointly by the ADGs of the two Departments.

<sup>24</sup> <http://nettsteder.regjeringen.no/foodfromtheocean/rome-2018/>.