



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF
ACTION ON NUTRITION



2016-2025

**FREQUENTLY ASKED
QUESTIONS**



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT** **GOALS**

Proclaiming the years 2016 to 2025 as the United Nations (UN) Decade of Action on Nutrition, the UN General Assembly in April 2016 committed Member States to ten years of sustained and coherent nutrition action. The primary objective of the Decade is to increase nutrition investments and implement policies and programmes to improve food security and nutrition within the framework agreed at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) held in November 2014.

While proclaiming the Decade, the General Assembly endorsed the two outcome documents of the ICN2: the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and its Framework for Action. These documents provide the core elements and the guidance from which national policies and programmes can be constituted.

The UN General Assembly also reaffirmed its commitment under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to “end malnutrition in all its forms”.

What is the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition?

The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, under the normative framework of ICN2 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, marks a new ambition and direction in global nutrition action: to eradicate hunger, end malnutrition in all its forms (undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight or obesity) and reduce the burden of diet-related noncommunicable diseases in all age groups.

The Decade will provide an umbrella for all relevant stakeholders voluntarily to consolidate and align nutrition actions across different sectors and facilitate policy processes across the areas identified in the ICN2 outcome documents.

The Decade is an unprecedented opportunity for achieving nutrition impact at scale, with a collective vision of a healthier and more sustainable future.

The vision of the Decade is of a world where all nutrition champions coordinate action and strengthen collaboration so that all people at all times and at all stages of life have access to affordable, diversified, safe and healthy diets.

The Decade will work for a 10-year period within existing structures and available resources.

The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition is not an initiative; it is not a programme nor a project.

Why do we need a UN Decade of Action on Nutrition?

Ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition is among the most urgent and pervasive development challenges. Most countries are burdened by more than one form of malnutrition or diet-related noncommunicable diseases. These forms may co-exist within the same country, community, household or individual.

Many families cannot afford enough nutrient-rich foods, like fresh fruit and vegetables, legumes, meat and milk, while foods and drinks high in fat, sugar or salt are often cheap and readily available.

The world is producing more than enough food to feed everyone. Yet one-third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted globally throughout the supply chain, from initial agricultural production to final individual food consumption.

Prioritized and accelerated action-oriented efforts within the Decade will lead the world to meeting the World Health Assembly six global nutrition targets 2025 and the global diet-related noncommunicable diseases targets, and the many additional nutrition-relevant targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Who is involved in the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition?

The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition belongs to everyone and aims to involve all countries, regardless of their income, the nature of their malnutrition challenges and the characteristics of their food and health systems.

The Decade is a global collective effort driven by UN Member States and co-convened by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

FAO and WHO, as co-convenors, will:

- promote policy dialogue at all levels;
- develop tools and instruments to support the implementation of programmes, policies, partnerships and investment; and
- track and report on progress toward achieving global goals and country-specific commitments for action on nutrition.

National governments and other relevant stakeholders, including international, intergovernmental and regional organizations, parliamentarians, civil society, academia and private sector all have an active role to play in the implementation of the Decade.

In particular, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) provides a vital multi-stakeholder platform where countries and their many partners can discuss progress, exchange lessons and experiences and agree on coherent and consistent food security and nutrition policies. The UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) serves as a coordinating mechanism for the UN bodies and international organizations involved.

How is the work programme for the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition being prepared and implemented?

The work programme of the Decade will be a global programme but with action at the country level.

Setting out the work programme of the Decade will be an inclusive, continuous, and collaborative process, building upon and connecting the independent initiatives of governments and their many partners.

Advocating for commitments by all stakeholders to implement specific interventions, policies, programmes and investments for action on nutrition in all relevant sectors will be crucial in order to bring about a real and meaningful system change to end all forms of malnutrition. The Decade will provide a standardized global framework for making, reporting and monitoring progress and for tracking results.

All stakeholders are invited to submit inputs to the work programme of the Decade, taking as reference the six pillars identified in the ICN2 Framework for Action. These six pillars are:

- sustainable food systems for healthy diets;
- aligned health systems providing universal coverage of essential nutrition actions;
- social protection and nutrition education;
- trade and investment for improved nutrition;
- enabling food and breastfeeding environments; and
- review, strengthen and promote nutrition governance and accountability.

Stakeholders are encouraged to set, track and achieve specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) commitments. This will help all stakeholders understand what action is intended and improve tracking.

Three groups of catalytic mechanisms will support the progress on nutrition commitments across the Decade: evidence-informed advocacy, convening platforms and accountability mechanisms.

Are there specific events on the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition and/ or key opportunities to share and discuss progress towards ending all forms of malnutrition?

FAO and WHO will work with the widest possible range of social actors and institutions, taking the opportunity to build upon and connect already planned events and to organize new bridge-building events to promote the Decade and its aims. On 20 September 2016 the co-convenors launched a major consultation process to develop the work programme of the Decade.

A series of consultations through coordination mechanisms such as UNSCN and multi-stakeholder platforms such as CFS, on-line forums and face-to-face meetings are being prepared to engage as many stakeholders as possible in the strategic process of developing the work programme. Participants will be invited to share views and ideas as well as receive feedback from countries and stakeholders on their expectations for the upcoming ten years.

Many countries and other actors are already strongly committed to existing food and nutrition initiatives, mechanisms, alliances, movements or partnerships. These efforts will provide the structure for action. The umbrella of the Decade creates a framework for sharing experiences, promoting improved coordination by the participants themselves, and building political momentum for scaled up global action.

The Decade will facilitate North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation and learning.

How is the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition contributing to the achievement of Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals?

With the adoption of the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the UN General Assembly in September 2015, world leaders committed to rid the world of the twin scourges of poverty and hunger and set out a vision for a fairer, more inclusive, prosperous, peaceful and sustainable world in which no one is left behind. SDG 2 in particular, aims to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

The achievement of the 2030 SDGs will only be met when much greater political focus is given towards improving nutrition, as nutrition is both an input and outcome of sustainable development.

The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition provides an opportunity for all partners to work together, mobilise action and accelerate efforts towards the elimination of hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition and meeting the SDGs by 2030.

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