



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

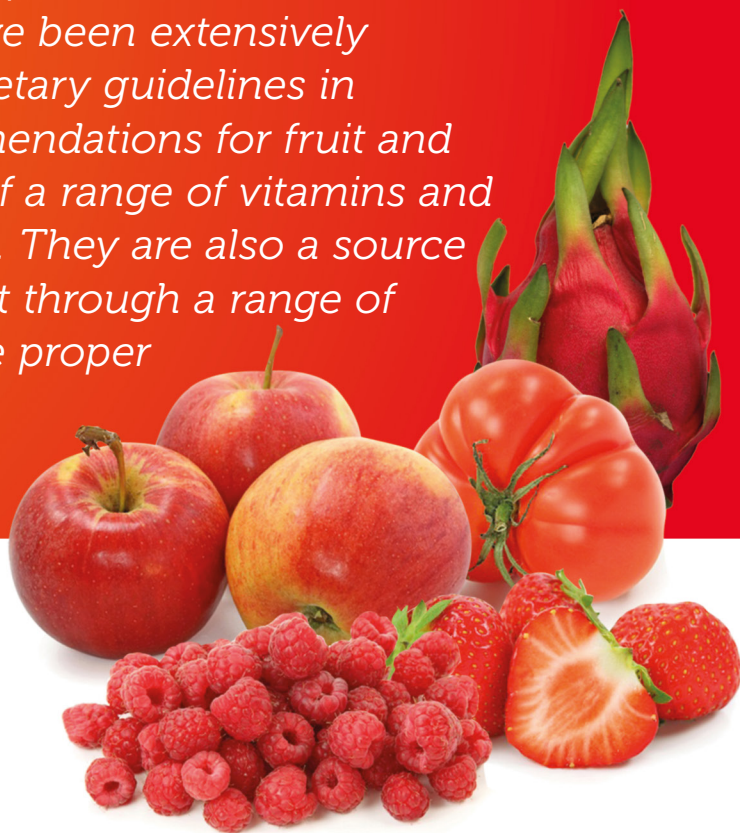


World Health  
Organization

# FRUIT AND VEGETABLES FOR HEALTH INITIATIVE



*The benefits of the daily consumption of fruit and vegetables for human health have been extensively researched and documented. Dietary guidelines in many countries contain recommendations for fruit and vegetables, due to their supply of a range of vitamins and minerals as well as dietary fibres. They are also a source of bioactive components that act through a range of mechanisms that are vital for the proper functioning of the human body.*



## CURRENT SITUATION

Despite the extensive promotion of fruit and vegetable consumption, worldwide per capita consumption is estimated to be 20 to 50 per cent short of the minimum daily recommended level of 400 grams, or five 80-gram portions, a day.<sup>1</sup>

Low intake of fruit and vegetables is among the top 10 risk factors for mortality in the world.

According to the Global Burden of Disease Study, worldwide 3.4 million deaths can be attributed to low consumption of fruit and 1.8 million to diets low in vegetables<sup>2</sup>.

In 2012, a total of 56 million deaths occurred worldwide. Of these, 38 million were due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), principally cardiovascular diseases, cancer and chronic respiratory diseases.

This scenario is not confined to developed countries; nearly three quarters of these NCD related deaths (28 million) occurred in low- and middle-income countries<sup>3</sup>.

Universal Declaration  
of Human Rights

ICN –  
International  
Conference  
on Nutrition

1948

1992

*Fruit and vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet. When consumed in appropriate amounts and linked to a better lifestyle, they could help prevent micronutrient deficiency and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as cardiovascular diseases and certain cancers. Other evidence suggests that when consumed as part of a healthy diet low in fat, sugars and salt/sodium, fruit and vegetables may help prevent unhealthy weight gain.*

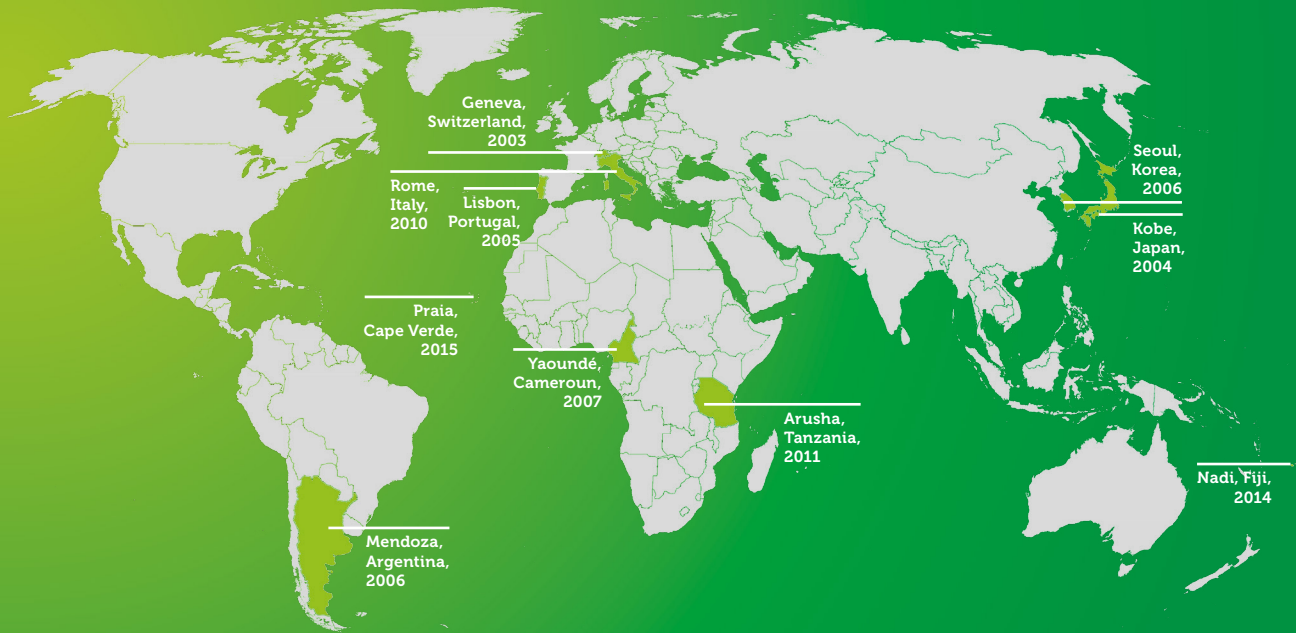


## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR A GLOBAL INITIATIVE

The right to safe and nutritious food and the important role fruit and vegetable consumption plays in ensuring food security and reducing malnutrition (including both overweight/obesity and undernutrition) have been affirmed on several occasions. This has been recognized since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted and proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in December 1948. More recently, the key role of fruit and vegetables on human health was reflected in three strategic documents:

- WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013-2020;
- Framework for Action guided by the Rome Declaration on Nutrition, commitment made during the second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2);
- Goals 2, 3 and 12 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).





Source: FAO, 2016

## PROMOTION OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES FOR HEALTH INITIATIVE

Since 2003, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) of the United Nations have been leading the global initiative “Promotion of Fruit and Vegetables for Health” (PROFAV). This initiative aims to raise awareness and to boost fruit and vegetable production and consumption for improving people’s health and farmers’ incomes. Since then, regional workshops have been organized to bring together experts in the horticulture, health, nutrition, and education sectors.

During the first workshop held in Kobe, Japan in 2004, a framework was developed for implementing national level interventions around the globe (referred to as the Kobe Framework). Since then, the PROFAV Initiative has been operational within a multi-partner framework at national level. A series of regional and national workshops were conducted to cover different geographical areas. The objective was to advocate the need for increasing the consumption of fruit and vegetables in the context of current eating habits and lifestyles, and include it in national nutrition policy and action plans.

### The two main pillars of the PROFAV Initiative are:

- Promoting diversified and sustainable production and consumption of fruit and vegetables for better balanced diets and to prevent NCDs and malnutrition in all its forms.
- Promoting scientific advancement and “know-how” in production, distribution, consumption and health benefits of fruit and vegetables.



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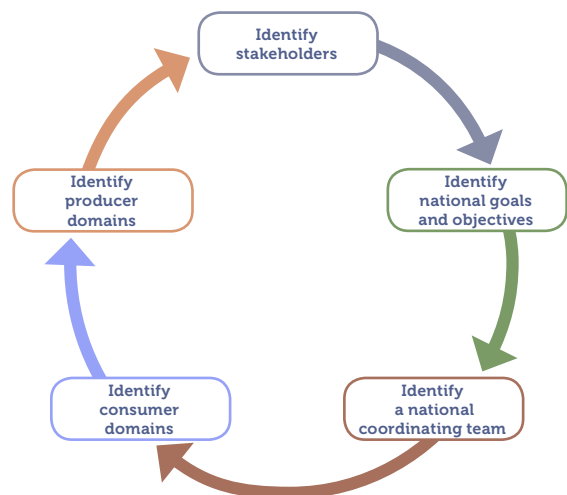
## THE KOBE FRAMEWORK

The purpose of the Kobe Framework is to guide the development of fruit and vegetable promotion programmes and interventions at national level. This framework provides a set of core principles (see Figure 1) and a 5-step strategy for action (see Figure 2) to help tailor fruit and vegetable promotion programmes to target groups, taking into account national or local production capacities, traditional agricultural practices and dietary habits, people’s health and nutrition requirements, and existing nutrition programmes.

Figure 1. Core principles of the Kobe framework



Figure 2. Kobe framework’s strategy for action



**The overall strategy of the framework is to:**

- Build a multi-sector consultation mechanism for fruit and vegetable promotion (e.g. coordination and partnerships between agriculture, health and education ministries, the private sector and civil society);
- Track fruit and vegetable supply and consumption, establish a baseline for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and identify groups at risk;
- Design integrated programmes built on on-going initiatives in horticulture, nutrition and public health.



## PRINCIPLES FOR FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROGRAMMES

Contribute to the prevention of all forms of malnutrition, NCDs, and nutrition-related diseases through increased production and consumption of fruit and vegetables for promoting healthy diets and better nutrition

Overall Objective

Reduce the occurrence of NCDs and nutrition-linked diseases

Health goal

Increase and diversify fruit and vegetables intake to reach the minimum daily recommended level of 400 grams

Consumption goal

Implement sustainable production intensification practices

Production goal

Facilitate the access to fruit and vegetables through efficient distribution networks and marketing possibilities for small-scale producers

Distribution goal



## PROFAV IN PRACTICE

The PROFAV Initiative fosters capacity building and policy development through workshops at national and regional levels by governments with support from FAO and WHO. Building on current national or regional programmes, these workshops aim to introduce the FAO/WHO Kobe Framework and assist countries in the development of initiatives that promote production and consumption of fruit and vegetables. A multi-stakeholder approach strengthens linkages between the health, education and agriculture sectors to share and scale up existing practices and policies. This is done by analyzing existing policies and programmes in all sectors, and identifying gaps, bottlenecks and opportunities for promoting the production and consumption of fruit and vegetables. When requested by governments, FAO and WHO can follow up and assist countries in establishing programmes and provide technical expertise such as:

- a) Developing **National Dietary Guidelines** and **Nutrition and/or NCD prevention Plans**;
- b) Promoting **school gardens** as a learning approach to increase awareness, knowledge and consumption of fruits and vegetables<sup>4</sup>;
- c) Supporting national and regional **advocacy campaigns** (e.g. Go local campaign, 5-a-day campaigns);
- d) Facilitating access and consumption of fruit and vegetables by promoting **home and community gardens, microgardens** and **cooking lessons**<sup>5</sup>;
- e) Providing support to create, develop and use **information/decision support tools** (e.g. Hortivar database);
- f) Promoting **good agricultural practices (GAP)** for safe and nutritious fruit and vegetables;
- g) Providing **technical and capacity building assistance** (e.g. implementing surveys, collecting data etc.);
- h) Building active, independent producer associations to **enhance farmers' role in R&D decision making**;
- i) Providing support to **Urban and Peri-Urban Horticulture (UPH) activities** for self-consumption and livelihood opportunities, and in its integration in urban planning<sup>6</sup>;
- j) Adopting national strategic plans for the **sustainable development of small-scale and intensive horticulture**; and
- k) Adopting national recommendations for incorporating **fruit and vegetables in school menus**<sup>7</sup>.



## CONTACTS

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- <sup>4</sup> *A new deal for school gardens.* Rome, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2010.
- <sup>5</sup> *Five keys to growing safer fruits and vegetables: promoting health by increasing microbial contamination.* Geneva, World Health Organization, 2012.
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